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THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM:
THEIR RELATION IN SOME CONTEMPORARY VIEWS
AND IN THE BIBLE

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment for the
requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts

Faculty of Graduate Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

1968

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ABSTRACT

Christian eschatology has during the last few decades moved into the center of concern, both among theologians and in the great Church Councils. One of the problems in this area is the question of the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God.

As there is little unanimity in the answers given thus far and these answers in themselves have tended to be intricate and opaque, we have undertaken to endeavour to give an answer which, to our knowledge, has not so far been given in concise terms.

In order to arrive at this answer, we have made a critical study of some of the major efforts to clarify the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God.

First of all, we have examined the idea that Jesus Christ is de facto the Lord of our contemporary world and the related idea of an existing brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God.

Secondly, we have examined a Protestant trend in this direction, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and of Prof. Karl Rahner.

Thirdly, we have thoroughly investigated the results of Prof. John Macquarrie's 'Principles of Christian Theology' for the understanding of the relationship between Church and Kingdom of God.

Fourthly, we studied Prof. Emil Brunner's concept of this relationship and Prof. Hans Küng's effort to include it in his ecclesiology.

Finally, we have tried to see this relationship in the light of the presence of Christ, as that presence unfolds in the Church and is to come to its full manifestation in the coming Kingdom, and to define the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God in these terms.

PREFACE

The impetus for this study was provided by two factors: our participation in the ecumenical dialogue during two decades and the scholarly introduction to contemporary writing on the subject of the Kingdom of God by Prof. Edward J. Crowley, C.Ss.R., of the University of Windsor, Ontario, during the past year. It was especially his prompting which made us realize that the problem of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God has remained a most vexing one and that its clarification and the finding of an adequate answer might prove to be of value for Christian theology in general and for the ecumenical movement in particular.

We are aware that the result of this study might offer no more than still another voice in the midst of already considerable confusion. Nevertheless, we have undertaken this study in the hope that it might also provide a contribution which at least points in the direction in which Christian theologians might proceed together until they will be able to speak with one voice of the Kingdom of God.

If we have laid much stress on our devotion to the Church of Christ, we have done so because it is within the context of the life of the Church that we ourselves

have experienced the encounter with the Living Lord and the self-abandonment to his mastery, with which comes the hope of our salvation that 'does not disappoint us.'

Unless otherwise noted, we have used for our Scripture-references the text of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, because of both the sustained attempt for linguistic preciseness and the contemporary character of the phraseology of this translation.

For quotations from books in the German or Dutch language, we have offered our own translation in the text of this study. Some of the French quotations have been rendered in the original, - French being an official language of Canada.

We have endeavoured to be most careful in using the Scriptures in such a way that textual references would retain the meaning which they have in the setting and context within which they occur in the Bible. We realize that even so the possibility of a different exegesis in certain cases must be acknowledged.

The encouragement, advice and the most constructive criticism of Prof. Edward J. Crowley have been invaluable for whatever useful and positive insights have been put forward in this study. For this we are deeply thankful.

At the same time we are indebted to him for the freedom given to us as he guided the development of our

thinking also at those points where our own insights and personal views did not necessarily coincide with those which he holds.

The staff of the Library of the University of Windsor has during the past year been most courteous and, indeed, most helpful to us. We are most appreciative of their constant efforts to make their excellent facilities available and useful to us to the full.

With sincere gratitude we acknowledge the work of Miss Jessie Willoughby of Windsor, Ontario, who gave unstintedly of her time and her outstanding skills as a stenographer-typist to the preparation of the manuscript.

Hans W. Zegerius.

University of Windsor.

Windsor, Ontario.

August 1968.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	11
PREFACE	iv
 Chapter	
I. THE THEME OF THIS STUDY	1
 II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE	
KINGDOM OF GOD :	
A. A Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God ?	2
B. A Trend within Protestant Theology . . .	19
C. The Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council	27
D. Karl Rahner and Henri de Lubac - Towards Universalism ?	31
E. John Macquarrie - "Principles of Christian Theology" :	
1. The Concept of Nothing	62
2. The Risk of God	70
3. The Fall of God	73
4. Disintegration of Theology	85
5. Universalist Christianity - an Impossibility	99
6. What Kingdom has no King ?	116
F. Conclusion	123

Chapter	Page
III. THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN TENSION:	
A. Prof. Emil Brunner's Ekklesia and the Consummation	125
B. Prof. Hans Kung - an Eschatology of Tension	156
IV. THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM AND THE KING :	
A. Some Basic Definitions	168
The Kingdom of God	168
The World	185
Salvation	192
The Church	197
B. The Relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God	207
BIBLIOGRAPHY	209
VITA AUCTORIS	214

I. THE THEME OF THIS STUDY.

The message of the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached and the lack of cohesive and explicit instruction in regard to the relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God in the teachings of himself and his apostles have presented a problem for theologians from the time when the Christian community began to become a distinct entity in human society. We are still far from a common consensus among theologians as to the nature of this relationship.

In this thesis we shall attempt to show that some contemporary efforts at defining and understanding the relation between the Church and the Kingdom tend to move so far away from the climate of thought and the concepts of the Bible that the question arises in how far their results can still claim to give expression to biblical faith. In particular we shall examine the trend toward a subtle identification of the Church and the Kingdom when both are conceived of as coextensive with the whole of mankind, and the role a universalist concept of salvation plays in this identification.

Finally we shall endeavour to indicate how the relation of the Church and the Kingdom may be understood in terms of the Bible and what degree of identification may be established on the basis of the Christocentricity of both concepts.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF CHURCH AND KINGDOM.

A. A BROTHERHOOD OF MAN UNDER THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD?

Whenever a complete identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God is attempted, the function of the Church in the world is inevitably conceived of as the exercise of the kingship of Christ, and the contemporary world is considered as the realm of his Kingdom. In past centuries this meant that church leaders regarded their actions and decisions as the expression of his rule. The Church's power and its influence in human affairs were seen as the exercise of his will. The Church became enmeshed in the affairs, issues and problems of society. The features of the Kingdom of God became this-worldly altogether. The essential transcendence of the Kingdom of God lay buried under a welter of concerns, interests and decisions on the plane of human development.

Today there seems to be a strong trend to identify the Church with the Kingdom of God, albeit in a less direct way. It finds expression in terms that often seem vibrant with new insights. Yet, the outcome is the same. More ostentatiously than ever before the Church is becoming enmeshed in the affairs, issues and problems of society. The features of the Kingdom of God once again are becoming this-worldly altogether. Although the Second Vatican Council and Roman

Catholic scholars, in subsequent studies, hesitate to identify the Church and the Kingdom, non-Roman scholars seem to press the issue of the this-worldliness of both Church and Kingdom (which must lead to their identification) with a great deal of radicalism. In doing so, they seem to be losing sight of the inherent sinfulness of man and the fallenness of human existence. The distinction between redeemed and unredeemed life is disappearing. Consequently the possibility of creating perfect harmony and well-being within the course of human history is postulated with great insistence. The new creation is envisaged as the result of human revolution. The concept of the Kingdom of God as expressed in T. W. Manson's "realized eschatology", i.e. as "the actualization in history of God's power and wisdom as the secret of all true human welfare," 1) is coming more and more to the fore. The idea is advanced that the Kingdom will be consummated on the level of interhuman relationships when all men have accepted the principles of love, freedom and justice. Mankind, in some views, will then have matured to the point where it will manage to get along without God quite well. God himself will, therefore, have to be eliminated from the Kingdom of God. The final step in this development would have to be a form of so-called Christian atheism as it finds expression, for instance, in the writing of Erich Fromm, who calls "the belief in a helping father -

1) T. W. Manson, THE SERVANT-MESSIAH. (Cambridge, 1961), p.63

a childish illusion." 1) He states, "I myself do not think in terms of a theistic concept, and ... to me the concept of God is only a historically conditioned one, in which man has expressed his experience of his higher powers, his longing for truth and for unity at a given historical period." 2) The question of Dr. James S. Smart, written in 1954, is highly pertinent: "How far a humanism that excludes the Christian faith in God has spread through the American community, and even through many parts of the Church, is a question worth considering." 3)

It is obvious that, when this point has been reached, Jesus Christ no longer can be our Contemporary, but has receded into a bleak past, kingly perhaps in his establishing the high principles of the Kingdom, but ultimately a king over nothing more than the affairs of the human race. The cosmic aspect of his rule is no longer in the picture, to say nothing of the transcendent and divine aspects of his person! The realm of his rule will coincide with the extent to which the principles he established govern interhuman relationships, just as Hinduism prevails where the ideas of karma and dharma are acknowledged. Thus the Kingdom of God would take its place among the phenomena of man's religions,

1) Erich Fromm, THE ART OF LOVING, (New York, 1956), p.70

2) ibid. p.72

3) James S. Smart, THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH, (Philadelphia, 1954), p.99

albeit at the summit.

Much of the explicit identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God in the past goes back to St. Augustine's statement, "So the Church now on earth is both the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of heaven." 1) The medieval Church forgot that even in St. Augustine's view the Kingdom had not found its perfection in the Church and that he qualified his teaching when he wrote, "The whole Church says: Forgive us our sins. She has therefore spots and wrinkles." 2) Forgetting the eschatological implications of St. Augustine's remark regarding the Church's 'spots and wrinkles', the Church took the proud and autonomous course which came to be known as 'Augustinianism', and which was continued into modern times. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft recalls that "the encyclical 'QUAS PRIMAS' of 1925 regarding the establishment of the feast of Christ the King at the beginning offers an admirably clear definition of the kingship of Christ and its foundation in the Bible. Strong emphasis is placed on the universal character of the Kingdom of Christ. However, almost casually there is the sudden statement that the Church is exactly this Kingdom of Christ, destined to comprise all the earth. So the distinction is wiped out. Christocracy becomes in fact ecclesiocracy." 3)

1) St. Augustine, DE CIVITATE DEI, Book XX, ch.9

2) ibid. Book XIX, ch.17

3) Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, HET KONINGSCHAP VAN CHRISTUS, ('s Gravenhage, 1947), p.123/4

6

But not only the Church of Rome has been prone to identify the Church with the Kingdom of God. The reign of terror of the Anabaptists in Münster in 1535 issues from the same error. The pathetic Jan van Leyden starving to death in an iron cage at the steeple of the Lambertikirche bears a terrible witness to it. John Calvin's effort to establish a form of theocracy in Geneva in 1536 and its dismal failure were due to the same mistake, by which the distinction between the consummation of the Kingdom and the function of the Church within unredeemed history was blurred. "Martin Bucer says quite definitely that the Kingdom of God is the Church of Christ." 1) "Beza did not speak otherwise." 2) One could adduce examples ad infinitum, even from recent church history.

Nevertheless, the identification of the Church with the Kingdom in such ostentatious ways is becoming a thing of the past. The frailties and sins within the Church have been too many and have been too mercilessly exposed in the past decades. Yet, the problem is with us today in a much subtler form. The real struggle has always been one between faith in the ultimate victory of Christ over all evil and suffering, and the impatience for the empirical experience of that victory. This tension remains with the Church, "for

1) Courvoisier, LA NOTION DE L'ÉGLISE CHEZ BUCER, p.70

2) Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH, (London, 1956), p.95

we walk by faith, not by sight." 1) Whenever the impatience gets the upper hand, the ancient error must repeat itself.

It does, indeed. Only, it is appearing in such an alluring form and has such a Christ-like ring to it, that it is difficult to recognize. It is even possible that many theologians who are in fact proposing the identification of Church and Kingdom, would be the first to deny that they are intending to do any such thing. The problem is that the connection is made in an indirect way. On one hand the claim is made that the Church must seek to find her true identity in the concept of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. On the other hand it is contended that in this very concept is contained the meaning and identity of the Kingdom of God. It may well sometimes escape attention that - if both the Church and the Kingdom are identified with the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God - they must of necessity and implicitly be identical with each other.

The theological basis for this concept of brotherhood is derived from the Scriptures. However, it is confined to the application of only a few fragments of Jesus' teaching and does not take into account the scope of the theology of the Bible. It leans heavily and disproportionately on two passages of the New Testament, namely Mt.25,31-46 and Luke 15,11-32, as if these were the key scriptures of all

1) II Cor.5,7

of the Gospel. Many Christians seem to be tenaciously insistent that in the parable of the prodigal son we find all we need to know about man's relation to God, and in the judgment-scene of Mt.25 all we need to know about man's relation to man. The process by which they arrive at these conclusions is aptly described by Prof. Hendrik Kraemer. "A passage is seldom interpreted as a whole, but one sentence, which is, or seems to be, the crucial sentence of the passage, is isolated and commented upon. These comments gradually grow into an autonomous world of ideas, which is only seemingly derived from the Bible. And so we can land in interminable theological debates, which lack a vigorous sense of self-criticism in the light of the Bible." 1)

One of the presuppositions basic to the brotherhood-concept mentioned above is that Jesus Christ is Lord of the world, exercising his rule throughout society and among the nations. There are Scripture texts which lend weight to such a presupposition, when they are taken in isolation, cut off from their context, and when their eschatological implications are neglected. Mt.28.18, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," and I Tim.6.15, "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords," may serve as examples. Of particular interest is Eph.1.22-23, which seems at first sight to provide a certain basis for the contention that the Lordship of Jesus Christ

1) Hendrik Kraemer, RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, (London, 1955), p.285

has been established throughout the world, once and for all. But a closer examination reveals the contrary. The text, "he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all," requires that the words 'for the church' be the key to its interpretation, which is often overlooked. Vs. 23 must be read, "the church is the fullness of him who fills all in all." Even here, though, we have to think of a process rather than of an accomplished fact, as the use of the gerund for the word 'fills' in the Greek text indicates. Hence, the English translations are lacking an element which is not neglected in a number of other translations. It would have been retained if the translation had read, 'fulfills', or better still, 'is fulfilling'. The King James Version reads, 'filleth'. Phillips has, 'fills'. The New English Bible understands the word in a passive sense, applied to Jesus, and reads, "who himself receives the entire fullness of God." But this is an isolated rendition of the text. Both the Dutch Statenvertaling (1618-1619) and the New Translation of the Netherlands Bible Society (1951) translate, 'vervult', equivalent to the German 'erfüllt' (Stuttgarter Jubiläumsbibel). Louis Segond's eminent French translation has, 'remplit'. These words correspond to the English 'fulfills' or, 'is fulfilling'. I Cor. 15, 28 shows that, even if this activity of Christ were to be understood as accomplished, it would still have to await a 'consummation'

when "the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one ('all in all')." So, the Church is his fullness, but even here it is still unfolding. The Christians are called to come to the knowledge of the "immeasurable greatness of his power i n u s w h o b e l i e v e." (vs. 19) True, "he has put all things under his feet." It occurs to us that the division of the pericope into texts at this point is unfortunate. The first part of vs. 22 clearly belongs to vs. 21 and has a cosmic scope; the second part of this text narrows Paul's vision to the Church and is, therefore, linked with vs. 23, as is evident from the use of the metaphor of Head and Body. But when God made Christ "sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come," (vs. 20-21) it was "in Christ" that he accomplished "the working of his great might," (vs. 19-20) From being in "the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men," (Phil.2,7) "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name." (vs. 9) The reign of Christ is, therefore, established. But it still meets with resistance. It is still in the process of becoming effective. It is a reign of conquest, not of peace as yet. "He must reign u n t i l he has put all his enemies under his feet." (I Cor.15,25) "He has put all things under his feet" (Eph.1,22, cf. Heb.1,8 and I Cor.15,25), "that at the name

of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil.2,10-11) But, "as it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him." (Heb.2,8) There is, then, as yet a "fullness of time", there is "a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph.1,10)

So it is 'for the church' that God "has made known", "to us," "in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will." (Eph.1,9) And it is 'for the church, which is his body' that he 'has made him the head over all things.' It is known by faith and experienced in faith alone. Therefore, the Lordship of Christ is his ever widening reign in the life-experience of the individual Christian and at the same time, in regard to its cosmic aspect, the Christian's hope. Towards this hope he lives in this world and in it erects by his life-witness the signs of it. For his "faith is the 'impulse' towards the goal which comes from the goal." 1) "For this reason faith is hardly distinguishable from hope." 2)

We conclude that Eph.1,22 does not lend itself either to give credence to the statement that the Lordship of Jesus

1) Emil Brunner, THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, FAITH, AND THE CONSUMMATION, DOGMATICS: VOL. III, (Philadelphia, 1962), p.341

2) ibid. p.339

is an actual fact in our contemporary world. It could only lend itself to being pressed into service for the support of this presupposition, if it is separated from the context of New Testament eschatology, where it belongs. When this happens, an autonomous world of ideas takes over from biblical faith in the way indicated by Prof. H. Kraemer.

It seems to us that on just such a basis Karl Rahner can say that the "Christian knows that God wanted the world to be just the way it is, or else the world would not be; and that even the 'merely' p e r m i t t e d is permitted only as a moment of a divine state." 1) As it is the 'Christian' who knows, this is only a more comprehensive and general way of saying that Jesus Christ is Lord of the world. The rule of God as universal and universally effective is thereby postulated.

This would place human suffering and, therefore, its culmination in death within the realm of God's Providence. They become inevitably instruments in the hand of God and part of his creation which "was very good." (Gen.1,31) The effort to establish this view has a long history. Brunner refers to Origen who said that the evil in the world serves the purpose of sharpening man's insight, and to Augustine's statement that evil might be equal to good in the overall economy of the creation, just as poison, when used properly, can be good. Brunner further quotes Leibniz' view that this

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL, (New York, 1966), p.61

world with all its imperfections still is "the best of all possible worlds." 1) Disengaging himself from these views, Brunner attacks the problem on the basis of the suffering of Jesus and, consequently, finds himself close to a biblical dualism: "Behind this suffering, behind this world-evil there is not the will of God, but the evil power." 2) However, he has previously already stated, that "there is a kind of suffering which is of necessity linked with finitude and corporeality." 3) Similarly Wade H. Boggs Jr. claims that suffering, quite apart from human sin, is a positive factor, "a necessary means for the production of the highest type of character." 4) He endeavours to prove that there is a creaturely death and that suffering is an essential condition "for mankind's advance from innocence to God-likeness in character." 5) Karl Barth also comes to the conclusion that death is given with man's creatureliness, with his finitude, with his belonging to his Creator. "To belong to Him we must be finite and not infinite. Finitude, then, is not intrinsically negative and evil. There is no reason why it should not be an anthropological

1) Emil Brunner, DIE CHRISTLICHE LEHRE VON DER SCHOEPFUNG UND ERLOESUNG, DOGMATIK, BAND II, (Zürich, 1946), p.213

2) ibid. p.214

3) ibid. p.149

4) Wade H. Boggs Jr., FAITH HEALING AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, (Richmond, Virg., 1956), p.133

5) loc. cit.

necessity, a determination of true and natural man, that we shall one day have to die, and therefore merely have been."

1) But Barth is aware that he is probing into an area where the tools of man's intellect must prove inadequate. "In the judgment of God man is in fact a sinner and debtor, and therefore by divine sentence subject to death, i.e., to death in the harsher sense, the 'second death'. It is actually the case that we cannot see or describe in any other way but as the second death the end of human existence and what death means for man." 2) Nevertheless, Barth forges ahead and comes to the above conclusion. In how far he has thereby broken through the limitations set to the human mind which he has first acknowledged and, consequently, in how far he is still moving within the context of biblical, i.e. Christian, thinking, is open to serious question.

Over against these views and Rahner's contention that 'God wanted the world to be just the way it is,' however, we would point to the biblical teaching of a power that is not and will not of itself be subject to God's rule and that has an effectiveness all its own. The statement in I John 5,19, that "the whole world is in the power of the evil one," is corroborated by Jesus' teaching about the "ruler of this world" 3) and Paul's assertion that "the creation itself

1) Karl Barth, THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION (Church Dogmatics Vol. II,2) (Edinburgh, 1950), p.631

2) ibid. p.628

3) John 12,31; 14,30; 16,11

will be set free from its bondage to decay." Even the Christian who is taught that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation," 1) is admonished: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" 2) because his newness is not fully accomplished. He has not harvested the life of the Kingdom but his are only "the first fruits of the Spirit." 3) That means a qualified newness, a delimitation of the rule of Christ even in the life of his own, even in his Church. It is possible for the apostle Paul to ask Christians, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?" 4) "... now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification," 5) he exclaims. For he is aware that much of our life does not find salvation here and now. The "redemption of our bodies" 6) is not an accomplished fact, although it is implicit in the first fruits of the Spirit. It is as yet part of the eschatological promise. "For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope"! 7) This means that even

1) II Cor.5,17

2) Rom.12,2

3) Rom.8,23

4) Col.2,20

5) Rom.6,19

6) Rom.8,23

7) Rom.8,24

what Christians have is in certain aspects not that which God wanted to be just the way it is, to use Karl Rahner's phrase. As a matter of fact, in terms of this world, of physical life, social, economic and political affairs, racial and international peace and harmony, it is very little. God is withholding the fulfillment of his will from these areas even in the life of his children, so that still "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." 1) The promise is still promise.

The statement that Jesus Christ is Lord of the world is true. It is true not because it is a statement of a de facto situation, but of faith. It is true, because it is the ultimate statement of our salvation, the statement of the eschatological fulfillment. We rejoice even though we realize the "folly of what we preach," 2) because "we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God." 3) Its truth lies in the fact that it is God's promise and that, because it is his promise, it cannot but be fulfilled. The folly in our contemporary world of such a hope lies in the fact that God's glory and, therefore, his rule is not demonstrable by us, - not even to us! It is true that even the demonic forces of evil cannot undo that promise. They are confined within the scope of the promise. They are

1) Heb.11,1

2) I Cor.1,21

3) Rom.5,2

judged by the unshakable ground on which the promise rests, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But it is equally true that God's will and rule are confined by the same fact. Their delimitation in our contemporary society is given in that the promise is promise: there are barriers to his rule which still need removal. As long as they are in existence, there is a demonic reality which denies, opposes and delimitates the exercise of the rule of Him who is the King of kings. Here and now his is a reign "u n t i l" 1), a reign which moves toward a goal, which is, therefore, incomplete and qualified until the very last of his enemies will be destroyed. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." 2) Only then, but then without any delimitation, will the promise issue in fulfillment: "And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." 3) That the promise has found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and is, in fact, being fulfilled where and insofar as his presence is experienced, will become clearer when we deal with the biblical teaching of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom. This side of the day of his coming in glory, however, there can be no question about the consummation of the eschaton within human life or society, - and what there is of a beginning fulfillment of

1) I Cor.15,25

2) I Cor.15,26

3) Rev.21,5

the promise, short of consummation, is inseparable of his presence and incomplete and hidden to the extent to which his presence is incomplete and hidden. It would seem evident that the same is true of his rule as Lord, so that - as we shall endeavour to show - his lordship, understood as the kingship of the Kingdom of God, is partial and incomplete to the same extent in the here and now.

B. A TREND WITHIN PROTESTANT THEOLOGY.

The neglect of the eschatological delimitation of Christ's de facto rule in our contemporary world can trap the Church in a phraseology which stands in glaring contrast to the facts of history and human experience. As an example we cite the "DECLARATION OF FAITH CONCERNING CHURCH AND NATION" of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which became one of its official confessional documents in 1955. One cannot but be struck by the fact that the first paragraph would be a very apt description of the Kingdom of God in its consummation, were it not for the use of the word 'Church'. This one word is the only indication that this paragraph is meant to deal with the present situation. Apart from that, the statement describes a state of affairs which is totally unrealistic in the contemporary world and applicable only to the Kingdom of God in its consummation. Because it illustrates so aptly the going awry of a church's thinking about the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we quote the first paragraph in full:

The one holy triune God, sovereign Creator and Redeemer, has declared and established His kingdom over all powers in heaven and earth. By the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, all things have been made subject to Him, so that even age-long evil is overruled for good. We worship and obey Jesus Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings, Judge and Governor among the nations. He is both Head of the Church and Head of the civil

State, although their functions under Him are to be differentiated, and their relationships to Him are not to be confused.

It is unavoidable that the Declaration becomes self-contradictory in its subsequent statements, for instance, when it upholds the right of the Christian under certain conditions to disown his government and states that he "indeed may be obliged by God's word to rebel against it." (par.6) It is obviously impossible to deal critically with the confusion, conflicts and corruption prevailing in society on the basis of what has been stated in par.1. But, due to her human frailty and, indeed, proneness to sinful folly, at times the Church yields to the temptation of attempting the impossible!

If the eschatological factor in the statement that Jesus Christ is Lord of the world is not sufficiently guarded and the statement is not carefully qualified, the door is opened to the identification of the Church as well as the Kingdom of God with the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Christ is seen as extending his rule to all mankind. Therefore, the Church is understood as having its true significance in the brotherly solidarity of all men.

Illustrative of this trend are the key phrases, printed in italics, of chapter 1.II. "This is the Victory" in the book "THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE" by D. T. Niles. They present the following sequence:

To live in a world where Christ is risen is
to live in a world where Christ is our contemporary.

To live in a world where Jesus is risen is
to live in a world where Jesus is Lord.

To live in a world where Jesus is risen is
to live in a world where Jesus is inescapable.

To live in a world where Jesus is risen is
to live in a world where Jesus is at work. 1)

In the same vein, Douglas J. Wilson can speak of "the comparatively recent search for Christ i n the so-called secular world, in contrast to taking him t o the world" 2) So we come to a concept of the presence of Christ and of his saving activity in the world which circumvents the destiny of the Christian to be his emissary, namely the fact that "we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." 3) Instead, Christ is seen as working through other agencies, apart from the Church and her proclamation of the Gospel. So, M. M. Thomas of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, Director of the Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, India, can say, ".... it is legitimate to ask questions like what is the nature of the dialogue Christ is having with Asian and African peoples through which He is raising ultimate questions of existence with them?" 4) Once again

1) pp. 26-32

2) THE CHURCH GROWS IN CANADA (Toronto, 1966), p.208

3) II Cor.5,20

4) THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW, Vol.XVIII No.1 -
January 1966

the divine intent behind the self-sacrifice of "Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all," 1) because God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2) is misconstrued as if the message that "the living God ... is the Saviour of all men" 3) were the starting point instead of the ultimate purpose of God's dealing with men! 4) The prerequisite of the "obedience of faith" 5), the great commission to "make disciples of all nations" 6) and the conditional factor of the Gospel, namely that "whoever believes in him should not perish" 7) and that his power is at work in "all who received him, who believed in his name" 8), are weakened to the point where they have little ultimate meaning for the salvation of the world. Consequently, the Church as "a holy nation, God's

1) I Tim.2,6

2) I Tim.2,4

3) I Tim.4,10

4) Indeed, all that God's love was to accomplish for the salvation of man has been accomplished in Christ. But just as there is no blanket condemnation of mankind - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil", II Cor.5,10 - so there is no blanket salvation of the human race - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life," John 3,36. It follows that in Christ God is the Saviour of all men, but that not therefore all men have been saved. As Calvin puts it in Inst. III, I,1 (Beveridge's translation): "So long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us. To communicate to us the blessings, which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us." Only on this basis can there be any question of Christ's dialogue with men.

5) Rom.1,5

6) Matt.28,19

7) John 3,16

8) John 1,12

own people" 1) takes on the features of the universal human community. The identification of the Church with the world becomes inevitable. D. T. Niles has stated it in so many words: "We do not take the gospel to someone to whom Jesus does not already belong, and if to be within the Church is to be a person for whom Jesus died, then the Church is coextensive with mankind." 2) But it is not. This is what Niles neglects to add. If it were so, then the call for decision, the appeal for acceptance of the Gospel which runs through the Bible would cut no ice whatever! But Niles insists that "there is a sense in which preaching always takes place within the life of the Church because preacher and hearer are both within the active ministry of the Church's Lord." 3) He does not immediately see that the former, namely that preaching always takes place within the life of the Church, is not necessarily the consequence of the latter, namely the active ministry of the Lord wherever the Gospel is preached or heard, accepted or rejected. The mere encounter with Jesus Christ does not place a man within the Church. The ministry of Jesus to an unbelieving, agnostic, or hostile world is essentially his call to decision, and it depends upon that decision vis-à-vis Jesus Christ whether a man will find himself within or

1) I Pet 2,9

2) THE PREACHER'S TASK AND THE STONE OF STUMBLING
(New York, 1958), p.111

3) ibid. p.112

outside the Church. Niles, however, states that it is very important to remember that preaching in a sense always takes place within the life of the Church, "because it will save us from treating those who have not yet confessed Jesus to be their personal Saviour as people who are outside Jesus. In our evangelistic work we are not seeking to make people become what they are not already. We are seeking simply to tell them what and who they are. The prodigal in the far country is a son away from home (Luke 15:11-32). He is no one else, he is nothing less." 1)

At this point it would seem that it is too late to save the departure from the Gospel's radicality by taking refuge in a paradox. D. T. Niles does try this way out. He states on the next page, "The distinction between the Church and the world is an important one to maintain when one seeks to emphasize the nature of this world as a 'saved' world." 2) One can hardly endeavour to maintain a distinction which first has been all but wiped out! Yet, Niles is too thorough a theologian to overlook the vital importance of the call to decision inherent in the Gospel. So he comments on Luke 14,24: "Preaching is invitation to the Supper, one either accepts or misses the feast, and it is terribly important as to which happens." 3) Previous to

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.113

3) ibid. pp.115-116

this he has stated that it "matters greatly whether a person is within the Church as believer or is outside the Church in his unbelief." 1) It would seem, however, that the earlier confusion is not thereby cleared up and that his position has become neither more lucid nor more biblical when he endeavours to summarize his thinking on this matter in a paradox, "Preaching is set in the context of the life and being of the Church, which lives by and witnesses to the accomplished work of Christ for all men. Preaching is also set in the context of the Church's warfare with the world, which warfare is concerned with ultimate issues." 2)

It would seem that D. T. Niles has set side by side certain aspects of the Gospel which ought to be stated in a sequence that indicates the biblical priorities. He has, therefore, confused matters which would be clarified if they were to be stated in the proper order. They might then be arranged as follows:

1. All men are equally lost from the Kingdom of God by their sinfulness. (Rom.3,23)
2. God's grace has made itself accessible to all men in Jesus Christ. (Rom.3,24)
3. It is God's will that all men be saved and enter his Kingdom. (I Tim.2,4)

1) loc. cit. p.114

2) ibid. p.116

4. Salvation is for all men conditional. (John 3,36)
5. For those to whom the offer of salvation comes in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the condition is faith. (John 3,16)
6. For those who were never faced with a call to decision vis-à-vis Christ, God has set conditions which lie outside the scope of the Church's perception or recognition, but not outside the saving efficacy of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Rom.2,6-16)
7. The Church can only deal with man according to his response to the Church's message of Christ.
(I John 4,2)
8. The Church cannot pronounce upon the certainty of salvation of the individual, be he Christian or non-Christian. (Phil.2,12; I Pet.4,17)
9. The Church can assure the believer that the Holy Spirit will, by his presence, grant him the certainty of salvation. (Phil.2,13; Rom.8,15-16)
10. The Church may rejoice over the witness to such assurance in the life of her children. (Col.1,4-5)

The Scripture references submitted above are not meant to be so-called proof texts, but are merely mentioned as examples of passages where the point at issue is taught explicitly, or is at least clearly implied.

C. THE CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL.

When we now turn to some of the teaching within the Church of Rome, we take our bearings from the Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council (De Ecclesia, Nov. 21st, 1964). 1) We find in this Constitution no explicit identification of the Church or of the Kingdom of God with the world or all of mankind. Nevertheless, there are some statements which may raise questions in this regard and which (as we shall see) have given rise to such identification with at least one Roman Catholic theologian, the eminent Karl Rahner.

The Constitution does not return to the explicit identification of the Church with the Kingdom as it was found in the encyclical QUAS PRIMAS of 1925. It does maintain an interwovenness and continuity between the two, which we intend to show to be a legitimate and biblical one. It states that the Church has the mission "to be, on earth, the initial budding forth of that Kingdom." The basis for this is the Church's unity with Christ, "its King." It has, therefore, the mission "to spread among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ." For in Christ "the Kingdom has already

1) We are quoting the text issued by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D.C.

arrived on earth." 1) "He it is who brings together the whole Church." Therefore, "there is but one people of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly rather than an earthly nature." 2) So, "its end is the Kingdom of God brought to perfection by Him at the end of time, when Christ, our life, shall appear...." 3)

Whilst we concur that the coming of Jesus Christ was the irruption of the Kingdom of God in this world, we might question such statements as: "in the presence of Christ, this kingdom was clearly open to the view of men," and: "the Kingdom is clearly visible in the very Person of Christ." 4) It would be wonderful if this were so. We question this, however, on the basis of the reaction of Jesus' contemporaries, of the experience of Christians of today and, most of all, because the very nature of faith precludes such insistence that the Kingdom is in such clear evidence either during the ministry of Jesus on earth or at present.

A more serious problem arises in connection with the statement that "the Church is the sacrament of the salvation

1) CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, p. 4

2) ibid. p.15

3) ibid. p.11

4) ibid. p. 4

of the world." 1) Rahner writes that "that is found in the introduction to the decree, though the final alterations to the text make it less clear than it was in the earlier version." 2) The Constitution reads, "...the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race..." 3) The "messianic people" are further called "a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race....also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all..." 4) It is not in conflict with what has been quoted above regarding the Church as the budding forth of the Kingdom, when the Constitution states that God's grace extends also to those who are outside Christianity, 5) or that those who, "knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter it or to remain in it, could not be saved." 6) But when it is claimed of the "catholic unity of the people of God" that "there belong to or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE, (Montreal, 1967), p.81

2) ibid. p.81

3) CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, p.1

4) ibid. p.11

5) ibid. p.18

6) ibid. p.16

grace of God to salvation," 1) - then the question arises whether in these lines and in what was said about the Church as a sacrament and seed the Council has sufficiently guarded against the possibility of extending what is expressed in the Constitution on the Church about the saving work of Jesus Christ in such a way to all mankind, that the Church no longer conceives of her mission as an offer of salvation to those who are lost from the Kingdom of God, but as communication and clarification of a state of salvation which is in actual fact universal. Much seems to depend on the expression 'the Church is like a sacrament' over against Rahner's "the Church is the sacrament of the salvation of the world." The concept of the Church's being a "seed" and the phrase "belong to or are related to it in various ways" (p.16) do not help to clarify what the Constitution really means to convey.

1) loc. cit.

D. KARL RAHNER AND HENRI DE LUBAC - TOWARDS UNIVERSALISM ?

Karl Rahner has put the weight of his profound thinking apparently on the side of a nearly complete identification of the Church with the human race.

He does so by a two-pronged argument. First, Rahner denies the assurance of salvation to the faithful. Secondly, he argues that the Christian must approach the non-Christian as an anonymous Christian, i.e. a Christian who may be unaware of the saving work of God's grace in his life and may even take the stance of rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and who is as uncertain of salvation as any given Church member and, therefore, is as certain of his salvation as any given Church member! Even though Rahner maintains the reality of perdition, he contends that the Christian - from whom he has taken the assurance of his salvation - must approach the non-Christian as 'a priori' included in the work of God's saving grace.

If we may be permitted to insert here the viewpoint of another prominent Roman Catholic theologian, - Prof. Hans Küng teaches also that the grace of God is wider than the Church. Yet, he uses much more restraint in drawing conclusions from this fact, which he also finds in the Scriptures, especially in I Tim.2,4-6 and 4,10 and in Rom.2. On the basis of the latter passage he writes regarding

non-Christians, "God's grace in Jesus Christ has already reached out to embrace them." 1) "We can be glad that God's grace, as it is revealed to us in Christ, is so vast and wide that it embraces the whole world: all men are within his good pleasure." 2) "...this justification of the sinner and his selfless, trusting abandonment to God, can happen in the case of pagans..." 3) "If a pagan surrenders himself in faith, in some obscure but real way, to the one true God in Jesus Christ, of whom he perhaps is only dimly aware under a hundred concealing veils, and if he then shows forth his faith in works of love, then he can be saved." 4) On the other hand, Küng does not hesitate to be specific about man's perdition. Commenting on Mk.9,37-40, he writes, "Only those are excluded from her (i.e. the Church) who do not believe because they are against Christ, not by ignorance but by malice; for these unbelievers there is no salvation." 5) But then he has already made it clear that it is not within any man's possibilities to determine whether any individual person is in this sense lost, by quoting at the outset of his chapter "What happens to pagans?" the words of Pope Pius IX, "We must hold fast to

1) Hans Küng, THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE (New York, 1963), p.117

2) loc. cit.

3) ibid. p.116

4) ibid. p.117

5) ibid. p.100

the truth that no one is guilty in the Lord's eyes of this sin of not belonging to the Church if he lives in invincible ignorance of the true religion. But who would presume to think that he could determine the cases in which it is no longer possible for such ignorance to exist, when all these cases are different according to the differences of nations and of countries and of the circumstances of individuals."

1) This is exactly what we have endeavoured to set forth in point 6. above (p. 26). We would call attention to the fact that the uncertainty of which we have spoken, in concurrence with the pronouncement of Pope Pius IX and the teaching of Prof. Küng, pertains to the question of lostness and perdition of non-Christians only. We are fully aware that the Church itself may harbour such people who 'are against Christ, not by ignorance but by malice.' We must contend, however, that it would be folly and quite contrary to the joy of our salvation to which prophets and apostles have testified, if the argument were to be reversed and - because of our restraint in pronouncing any one person lost to the Kingdom of God - we were to maintain that, therefore, no one Christian can be assured of his salvation either! 2)

1) loc. cit. p.102

2) We have previously stated that the C h u r c h cannot p r o n o u n c e upon the certainty of salvation of the individual, meaning a particular individual. But we do acknowledge that the individual Christian may and, indeed, ought to have this assurance. See e.g. Rom.8,16 and I John 3,1.

This is, however, the position of Karl Rahner in his book "Vom Glauben inmitten der Welt". He does maintain that "damnation is equally radical as eternal bliss..." 1) and rejects the idea that we could know that all men are saved. "It would be wrong, against the Christian faith and vain presumption of the creature, if we were to hold that we know that all men will be saved." 2) But he extends the argument to the point where we cannot know of anybody, including ourselves, whether we are saved. "One thing is off hand a matter of course: we know for no one a real and definite answer. For no one. Not even for the 'good Catholics', who died after receiving 'all the holy Sacraments'. All men, the good Christians included, are entering the darkness of God in silence." 3) That Rahner, in a footnote must call the canonization of a saint an exception is, contrary to his opinion, little comfort for the average Christian. For it is the saints who would least of all expect to be canonized, and that leaves every last one of us with nothing but fear and trembling in the face of death and eternity. What then has become of the indomitable faith expressed in the words of Paul the apostle, "So then, whether we live or whether we die, we

1) Karl Rahner, VOM GLAUBEN INMITTEN DER WELT (Basel, 1961), p.17

2) ibid. p.123

3) ibid. pp.112/113

are the Lord's"? 1)

We would do an injustice to Prof. Rahner, if we were to overlook that behind his viewpoint there lies a warm compassion for all that are lost, a deep humility regarding the insufficiency of the Church in presenting the Gospel clearly and the desire to deepen and intensify the Christian hope in the grace of God. He says, "there is grace of Christ 'outside' the Church." 2) And, "Are not we Catholics often ourselves the ones, who through our own fault distort someone's view of the true nature of the Church?" 3) He also quotes the statement of Pope Pius IX 4) and says, "One may, indeed one must, nevertheless, for all others also hope in the saving mercy of God." 5) And Rahner quotes again and again Phil.2,12, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." In fact, one cannot help being impressed with the great awe with which he comes face to face with the demands of Christ, the fear and trembling, indeed, with which he speaks of the Church's call to holiness, "without which no one will see the Lord," 6) - and, therefore, of his own struggle! If only Rahner would

1) Rom.14,8

2) Karl Rahner, VOM GLAUBEN INMITTEN DER WELT (Basel, 1961), p.114 n.

3) ibid. p.114

4) ibid. p.117

5) ibid. p.113

6) Heb.14,12

complete the quotation of Phil.2,12, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," with the reassurance of vs. 13, "for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure"!

Prof. Rahner believes that he does find support for his view that the Christian cannot be certain of his salvation in the Constitution on the Church, art. 14, where a distinction is made between belonging to the Church 'corpore' and 'corde', merely physically (one might say: as a nominal member of an institution within human society) and with all one's heart (in the depth of one's being). The Constitution states that the Christian who "does not persevere in charity" or, being within the reach of the grace of Christ, fails "to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall ... not be saved but ... will be the more severely judged." One is left with the impression, however, that Rahner is pressing the Constitution into the service of his own views when, after referring to art. 14, he enlarges upon it as follows, "The Catholic Christian knows that he belongs 'corpore' to the Church; but whether he lives 'corde' in the Church through faithful love, this he does not know, surely; this he can - must - only hope." 1) What Rahner is achieving here is that, by postulating that the Christian is equally uncertain of his salvation as the non-Christian, he can make the claim that

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.58

the non-Christian's hope of salvation is equal to that of the Christian! Therefore, he can continue: "But because the Christian also hopes for the salvation of others; because he knows enough, theologically, to see that he may h o p e for their salvation (even though he knows that it is not beyond doubt); because today he can more readily see, theologically, how it is possible to be a Christian (we use the word here to mean one living in the grace of God and his Christ) even without knowing the name of Christ, or even while thinking that Christ must be rejected" 1) So he comes to the conclusion that the Christian must not set out on his mission to the world in order to win men to the membership of the Church 'corde', for this is to be assumed 'a priori'. "We mean that it is the Christian's duty to p r e s u m e in hope that God's grace is at work in his brother's existence, for to think otherwise would show a lack of love on his part." 2) Therefore, "the Christian will meet boldly and hopefully as brothers those who do not wish to be his brothers in his 'view of the world'. He will see in them persons who do not yet know what in fact they are, who have not yet clearly realized what in the depths of their life they are, it is to be assumed, already accomplishing. (This is so much the case that we are in duty bound hopefully to presume it.

1) loc. cit. p.58

2) ibid. p.61

It would be uncharitable to assume less. For can I, as a Christian, simply take it for granted that others are not in the grace of God?" 1) Hence, the grace which he sets out to share with others is one which is a d d e d to the one by which a man is a member of the Church 'corde'. This is the "grace which the others lack, which they y e t lack, namely, the grace to belong to the Church 'corpore' and not only 'corde' ..." 2)

As yet, these ideas have not taken the form of a theological system. Karl Rahner is aware of the need for "a very subtle theology of the possibility and existence of anonymous Christians." 3) But the basis on which Christians and non-Christians are to meet each other as brothers is indicated in his writing. He seems to find it in "Man's transcendence as spirit" which "constitutes by the nature of the case a 'revelation'." "A man's acceptance of the inalienable endlessness of his transcendence" would then effect his salvation, for "why should it not in fact by God's action in us be the dynamism which carries us into God's life?" Rahner even goes a step further and implies that, given this acceptance, a man may not be given more

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), pp.85-86

2) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.60

3) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.95

"perhaps even the better to ensure his salvation." 1)

With this notion of 'man's transcendence as spirit' Rahner is within the context of the debate in which some twenty years ago a number of prominent Roman Catholic theologians discussed the gratuity of the gift of the supernatural and the possibility of a purely natural destiny of man leading to a state of bliss other than the beatific vision of God, and inferior to it, which - along with other more or less related problems - prompted the Papal Encyclical "Humani Generis" of August 12, 1950. In this debate, among others, the names of Bouillard, Donnelly, and foremost that of De Lubac figure prominently. In September 1950, Philip J. Donnelly, S.J., dealt with the problem under discussion in his article "The Gratuity of the Beatific Vision and the Possibility of a Natural Destiny." 2) He took up the treatment of M. Maurice Blondel's theology by Père Henri Bouillard, S.J. in 1949. 3) Bouillard referred to Blondel's work "L'action" of 1893, of which he said, "Blondel concluded that the inevitable tensions of human life and conduct are oriented toward an inescapable option, - the free choice or rejection of the transcendent God." He summarized Blondel's position of that time in the

1) loc. cit. p.87

2) THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, Sep. 1950, Vol. XI, No. 3, p.374 ff.

3) Père Henri Bouillard, L'INTENTION FONDAMENTALE DE MAURICE BLONDEL ET LA (sa?) THÉOLOGIE, in RECHERCHES DE SCIENCE RELIGIEUSE, Vol. XXXVI (1949), pp.321-402

statement, "Absolument impossible et absolument nécessaire, notre destinée est surnaturel." 1) A purely natural destiny is not in the picture in Blondel's early work. Some forty years later, however, Blondel changes his position. After 1932, "Blondel assigns a positive role to a consideration of a purely natural destiny in his doctrine of the gratuity of the supernatural. it is fundamental." 2) Bouillard regretted Blondel's change of mind and called it a 'retrogression'. He "makes it perfectly clear that, in his opinion, the gratuity of the supernatural, springing solely from the inexpressible free gift of God, can be and should be maintained and defended in all its purity, without any recourse to the possibility of a destiny inferior to the beatific vision." 3)

Donnelly, opposing Bouillard, defends the theory of pure nature and, therefore, of the possibility of a destiny inferior to the supernatural destiny of man, because without it "the gratuity of the supernatural is inexplicable." 4)

With this view he finds himself opposing De Lubac's "Le Surnaturel", published in 1946. "The primary theological conclusion of SURNATUREL is that the complete gratuity of man's supernatural destiny to the beatific

1) loc. cit. p.327

2) Philip J. Donnelly, S.J., art. cit. p.382

3) ibid. p.383

4) ibid. p.389

vision does not involve the concrete possibility of an inferior destiny." 1) Thereby, De Lubac is in the company of the early Blondel, as he holds that man "possesses at the very center of his being the desire to see God as he is in himself; this desire is simultaneously inefficacious and absolute. Inefficacious, because it is totally incapable of producing grace, the sole means of the vision of God, but rather awaits it as a gift; absolute, nevertheless, because God cannot refuse to fulfill the supernatural destiny which is inscribed in the very nature of finite spirits." 2) Donnelly counters that "it cannot be maintained without absurdity that the very nature of spiritual beings in our historical order is constituted by the natural desire for the beatific vision which God cannot but fulfill with his gratuitous and free gift of grace." 3) He argues that "St. Thomas affirms without hesitation that the beatific vision transcends all natural desire as it transcends all finite intelligence, whether human or angelic." 4) As De Lubac later was to admit, "Le Surnaturel" was "written in haste at the request of various people, the sketch was in fact too rapid." 5) He, there-

1) loc. cit. p.391/392

2) ibid. p.392

3) ibid. p.395

4) ibid. p.394

5) Henri de Lubac, S.J., THE MYSTERY OF THE SUPERNATURAL (Montreal, 1967), p.65

fore, elaborated on his views in an article in "Recherches De Science Religieuse" in 1948, entitled "Le Mystère du Surnaturel". Donnelly was equally opposed to the views set forth in this article, the purpose of which was according to Donnelly, "to explain the gratuity of the supernatural without any recourse to the possibility of an inferior destiny, i.e., to the possibility of a state of 'pure nature'." 1) He rejects the notion that human nature as we know it in its historical context cannot be conceived without "its supernatural finality which is inscribed therein," 2) of which De Lubac says, "On ne pourrait réellement envisager cette nature avant d'y voir inscrite sa finalité surnaturelle." 3) Donnelly contends that "original sin consists precisely in the fact that in his initial existence no human person descended from Adam is intrinsically finalized by the supernatural end of the beatific vision." 4) He is, therefore, diametrically opposed to the view De Lubac expressed in "Le Surnaturel": "Il ne peut y avoir pour l'homme qu'une fin: la fin surnaturelle, telle que l'Évangile la propose et que la théologie la définit par la 'vision béatifique'." 5)

1) Philip J. Donnelly, S.J., art. cit. p.397

2) ibid. p.402

3) ibid. p.402 fn.

4) ibid. p.401

5) ibid. p.403

It would seem to us that the problem boils down to the question whether a human being is elevated to the supernatural order by baptism 1) or whether man's supernatural finality belongs to the reality of human nature as such in its concrete historic existence. The former position, "put forward again in so many words in modern times by Fr. Philip Donnelly," 2) De Lubac traces back through Suarez (1857) to Cajetan, although he "was not properly speaking its inventor, for it was not produced all of a piece in a day." 3)

At first sight, the Encyclical "Humani Generis" seems to come down solidly on the side of Donnelly, when it states, "Others destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering them and calling them to the beatific vision." 4) Nevertheless, the encyclical has obviously left room for a shifting of positions on both sides. De Lubac wrote in 1967 that there are, among his opponents, theologians who hold "that the state of 'pure nature' has not in fact ever existed (5), or that 'historic man' has

1) see ibid. p.400

2) Henri de Lubac, S.J., op. cit. p.89

3) ibid. p.90

4) FOUR GREAT ENCYCLICALS OF POPE PIUS XII
(New York, 1961), p.179

(5) so that, in fact, they posit something which has no reality, reducing it not only to an abstraction, but to unreality!

been in fact created in a supernatural order (1)." 2)

On the other hand, De Lubac himself seems to leave much more room for his opponents to adhere to their views, albeit in the form of a highly theoretical hypothesis, when he says, "Without dogmatically denying that there may be other possibilities, without rejecting any abstract hypothesis which might be a good way of making certain truths more vivid to us, it is surely 'more simple and reasonable', when working out a theological doctrine, not to try to get away from reality as we know it." 3)

In order not to do injustice to our Roman Catholic colleagues, we are constrained to confess to a certain amount of perplexity in regard to some of the intricacies of the problem and the vehemence with which our colleagues have pursued the debate, when we come to it from within the context of Reformed Presbyterian theology, - as is the case. Even if we were to take sides in the problem itself, we could not seriously consider a role for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism as Donnelly and, in general, Roman theology ascribes to it. We do not know of a 'grace' conferred by Baptism at all. When we recall our conviction of the complete and utter creatureliness of man, we find certain

(1) so that it no longer is obvious that of a number of hypothetical possibilities that of 'pure nature' should be chosen to provide a basis on which to build the concept of the gratuity of the gift of the supernatural!

2) Henri de Lubac, S.J., op. cit. p.92

3) ibid. p.64

concepts which are apparently taken for granted in Roman theology alien to our thinking. When De Lubac says that "man's longing for God is in a category of its own;" and, quoting Blaise Romeyer, continues, "'The total gratuitousness of our adoption as sons by God the Father transcends without absorbing it the utter gratuitousness of the fundamental gift of creation'," 1) we find the concept of 'adoption' in this connection difficult to place in the context of our understanding of scriptural teaching. For only two times we find the term employed in the New Testament, and both times it is far removed from the scene of man's creation. In Gal.4,5 it is used to indicate the restoration of man's love-relationship with God in Christ. In Rom.8,23 it indicates the consummation of our salvation when our bodies are taken up into the imperishability, glory, and power of the renewed cosmos. 2)

Similarly, when De Lubac, quoting Augustine, says, "'In effect what we have been given in order to exist is one thing, what we have been given in order to become saints is another,'" and continues, "in other words, the spirit of man is one thing, the Spirit of God another, although once given, the latter becomes equally and literally 'our spirit'," 3) it is hard for us to understand

1) loc. cit. pp.114/115

2) comp. I Cor.15,42-43

3) Henri de Lubac, S.J., op. cit. p.115

precisely what he means, - and it becomes impossible for us to be of one mind with him if he means to imply that God, in creating man as a spiritual being, would have brought about a kinship between himself and us which could in any way prompt the conclusion of any degree of identity of his Spirit with the spirit of man.

Or again, De Lubac is reflecting an element in Roman Catholic theology that would make it most difficult for us to follow his thinking with any measure of agreement when he states that "this 'perfect gift' of the supernatural, which is completed in the vision of God, constitutes for created nature, however high we rate that nature, a real sublimation, a real exaltation above itself, in short a real deification." 1)

We recognize, therefore, that there is a possibility that we have not weighed properly the aspects of the problem of the gratuity of the gift of the supernatural with which we have dealt. It seems to us, however, that we are pinpointing De Lubac's present position accurately and are at the core of his work "The Mystery of the Supernatural" in quoting from p. 124:

"Considered in itself, statistically one might say, my nature or my essence is no more than what it is. There is, let me repeat, no slightest element of the supernatural in it, nor the slightest power to raise itself up to it, nor

1) loc. cit. pp.120/121

the smallest principle for laying claim to it. But no more than we can envisage, except in order to represent the thing humanly to ourselves, any real subject existing before being brought into being by the creative act, can we now envisage that nature in its concrete reality as existing before having its finality imprinted upon it; and that finality, by God's free will, is a supernatural one." 1)

It would seem to us that De Lubac in this statement has declared himself content with the fact that others will take their starting point in the presupposition that God can "create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision." 2) At the same time, he has cleared the way for himself to leave this area of speculation behind in order to proceed in his understanding of the nature of man from the point where we can envisage the nature of man as that nature which has its supernatural finality imprinted upon it. This, then, would be identical with Rahner's concept of 'man's transcendence as spirit.' Henceforth, De Lubac can speak of man's nature as being "Innately opened to the universal and directly related to God." 3) Quoting Maurice Nédoncelle, he can state that I can "'weave into the fabric of my being the whole universe, of

1) loc. cit. p.124

2) ENCYCLICAL "HUMANI GENERIS", op. cit. p.179

3) Henri de Lubac, S.J., op. cit. p.137

the fabric of which I am naturally a part.'" 1) He can be in agreement with Rahner and say that "spirit possesses a 'limitless transcendence', which gives the human horizon an 'infinite character', and this kind of infinitude is precisely what constitutes the 'definition' of man and his 'limit'." 2) From here it is only one step to Rahner's contention that "a man's acceptance of the inalienable endlessness of his transcendence" would effect his salvation and that a man may not be given more "perhaps even the better to ensure his salvation." 3)

We are here dangerously close to finding the basis for man's salvation in man! And man's transcendence as spirit is given with his creatureliness. It is, therefore, inherent to all men. Man's salvation, then, is given with his being human! We find ourselves at the same point where the idea of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God finds its origin, namely at the point where man is in essentially unbroken communion with God and his fellow-men. That point, however, is separated from man's existence here and now by the chasm of Gen. 3, the Fall, by which man's relation with God was broken and the brotherhood of man disrupted. By taking his stand where he does, Rahner has chosen a point of departure from which it is impossible to proceed toward

1) loc. cit. p.138

2) loc. cit.

3) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.87

the encounter in which God addresses man in the gospel of Jesus Christ, i.e. the actual historical situation of man in his sinful lostness.

The only barrier between Rahner's thinking and a radical universalism is that he makes man's acceptance of his own transcendence the condition of his salvation. This prevents him from regarding the brotherhood of man as an undeniable fact and prompts him to speak again and again of the Christian's duty to p r e s u m e that his fellow-man is his brother. Nevertheless, Rahner proceeds in places as if in actual fact man's sinfulness is not in the picture at all. He contends that "the world of all ages" ... "stands under the mercy and not under the judgment of God..." 1) and that the Christian of the future "cannot regard the Church otherwise than as the promise that through the very midst of the world's contradiction to God its deeper consent to God is nevertheless being accomplished through the predominance of God's grace." 2) "He will think of the Church in its true nature as the historic audibility of God's comprehensive Yes to the world..." 3) Considering in this context the rejection, the No of the world to God, he says, "...even this No only lives and has force from the partial or total Yes which is in it or behind it, and which

1) loc. cit. p.90

2) loc. cit.

3) ibid. p.91

belongs with the Yes which is the Church," 1) so that the Church becomes "the revelation of what the others are." 2) He returns in this connection to the argument from the uncertainty of salvation within the Church: ".... and if in regard to those others it is not 'certain' what they are, neither is it certain that those who are inside the Church belong to the band of the elect." 3)

It will be difficult to maintain the significance of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ for man's salvation in the framework of the foregoing. Instead of being the core and climax of God's dealing with man in his sin, they tend to recede into the background. Instead of being the point at which God cuts into man's existence in lostness, laying open the depth of his despair and at the same time taking hold of him in his perdition, shaking him awake to the fact that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," 4) and calling him to acceptance by faith of the fact that he is "justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," 5) the death and resurrection of Jesus become a divine 'a priori', a cosmic-divine act of self-giving with universal efficacy.

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.93

3) loc. cit.

4) II Cor.5,10

5) Rom.3,24

which has no decisive bearing on man's relation to God and, therefore, does not qualify the relationship of man with man. One must then, indeed, claim that the whole world stands not under judgment but under grace. For how could one any more say within this context that there will be a day when "God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus"? 1) Rahner approaches the point where the priorities of the Christian faith become reversed. When he speaks of the missionary task of the Church and urges that men must belong to the Church "'corpore' and not only 'corde'" 2), he seems to be putting the emphasis where it surely does not belong. For it is undeniable that the basic and vital relation with the Church is that a man belong to it 'corde'. In the light of Rahner's doubts as to the significance of man's belonging to the Church 'corpore' for his salvation, we would think that he would have to concur. The same reversal of priorities tends to occur when he so emphatically states that it would be uncharitable and a lack of love to meet non-Christians in another way than as brothers. For there is a warning against just such an assumption in the last sentence of the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, in which Jesus, as in so many of his parables, has placed the key that unlocks the story: "for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found." If then the

1) Rom.2,16

2) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.60

non-Christian stands where the prodigal son stood when he was in the far country, he is dead to the brotherhood of man and lost to the fatherhood of God. And "when he came to himself" (vs. 17) in the parable, he was not therefore restored to his sonship, but Jesus' words clearly mean no more than that he finally became honest with himself and saw his true situation. Therefore, it may be an impulse of love to hide from the non-Christian his true state of lostness. But it will tend to immerse him only deeper in his lostness in the end. Greater and much more sacrificial is that love which recognizes the separation, the chasm, the alienation and hostility, but which nevertheless reaches across that radical separation in defiance of the barriers that are insurmountable to any merely human expression of love, in the faith that "what is impossible with men is possible with God," because "the love of Christ controls us." 1)

To what extent Rahner is still aware of this, remains a question. He does insist that "the history of mankind (and of the Church, as the Constitution stresses) is a unity in which all men from Abel to the last human being belong together." 2) And yet, it is truly startling to notice that Cain has been, consciously or unconsciously, excluded from this unity! We agree with Rahner that "it is

1) Lk.18,27 and II Cor.5,14

2) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.89

easier and less restrictive to be able to say to someone: become what you are, than: destroy what you were until now." 1) But how does that place a man in the situation where he can be assured, "you have been raised with Christ" - "for you have died" - "put to death therefore what is earthly in you"? 2) How is he to say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"? 3) It is this apostolic teaching which militates against Rahner's contention that it cannot be said that his view of the Church "will inevitably hamper or render ineffective the missionary zeal." 4) It cannot but do just that! The Gospel is not the offer to all men of the k n o w l e d g e of their salvation, but the offer of salvation. If that offer is to be meaningful at all, salvation must be salvation from something, salvation from something total and radical, something which - whatever it may be - is n o t salvation! Has not Rahner himself stated that "the radicality of damnation equals that of eternal bliss"? 5) Yet, Rahner seems to deny that radicality when he contends that "in preaching Christianity to

1) loc. cit. p.93

2) Col.3,1-5

3) Gal.2,20

4) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.93

5) Karl Rahner, VOM GLAUBEN INMITTEN DER WELT (Basel, 1961), p.17

'non-Christians', therefore, the future Christian will not so much start with the idea that he is aiming at turning them into something they are not, as trying to bring them to their true selves." 1) This must make the Church appear as the tip of an iceberg of which the greater mass is hidden beneath the surface, a partial manifestation in the form of an institution of a much wider reality. So Rahner can state that the future Christian "will see the Church as the visible embodiment of what is already interiorly binding, as the historical concrete form of what is universal and in fact taken for granted as a matter of course ...". 2) We can only doubt whether the first paragraph of the Constitution on the Church can be made to support such an assumed universal efficacy of the grace of God and was indeed intended to teach that "the Church is not the society of those who alone are saved, but the sign of the salvation of those who, as far as its historical and social structure are concerned, do not belong to it." 3) To be sure, the Constitution does not take the position that the Church's members are the only ones to be saved. It would seem to us, however, that it is very far from depicting the Church as a sign that n o t to belong to the Church means salvation! We are particularly reminded of the conciliar

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.88

2) ibid. p.88

3) ibid. p.82

statement that "the Church, or, in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world." 1)

It would seem to us that the visibility of which the Constitution speaks consists in the membership of the Church. Par. 9 makes it clear that the messianic people, the new Israel, "is called the Church of Christ." 2) "It does not actually include all men." 3) If this is so, would it not be a cruel injustice to the non-Christian if the Christian were to "confront in courage and hope and as brother even that man who does not want to be his brother" and to "see that man as someone who does not fully realize what he is..."? 4) Would it not be tragic if he were to "see in them persons in whom the unutterable sighs of the Spirit have invoked, requested and accepted the silent mystery which penetrates all human existence, which we know as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," 5) if this were not so? Would that not amount to an act of shutting in actual fact the door of salvation in the non-Christians' face? The Second Vatican Council has stated that the Church

1) CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, p.3

2) ibid. p.11

3) loc. cit.

4) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.61

5) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.86

grows visibly. This must be so, even if that visibility brings with it the possibility that our eyes may deceive us and that we mistake for membership of the Church 'corpore' and 'corde' what is merely 'corpore' to the exclusion of the indispensable membership of the Church 'corde'. In other words, the distinction between redeemed and unredeemed life is at the very basis of the biblical concept of salvation and can only be effective in inter-human relationships if and when it coincides with the distinction between Church and world, Christians and non-Christians. Even if God knows better, - we do not and cannot! For the Christian to meet the non-Christian as a brother, means that the brother must have come home. Irksome as that may be, this can only take place within the context of the Church, as long as the Church, though not the Kingdom of God, is all we have of the Kingdom of God. For time and again, this homecoming is cast by Jesus in the mold of the expression "entering the Kingdom of God." 1)

We cannot presume to see through the given situation, i.e. the situation which God has given us. We have no claim to the insight of God. When Rahner urges us to assume in the non-Christian 'the unutterable sighs of the Spirit', he is asking not for an act of charity but for an act of judgment to which we have no access and which is the sole prerogative of the Judge of all the earth. The biblical norm that

1) Mt.7,21; 19,23; Mk.10,15; Lk.18,24; John 3,5 etc.

"every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God," 1) may seem a crude tool for the sophisticated modern mind. Yet there seems to be no substitute for its application in some form or other. For where it has been laid aside, the Church is in danger of losing its identity and, therefore, its message altogether. This standard precludes the assumption of an anonymous Christianity outside the Church altogether. If it is nevertheless assumed, the result can only be that the Church will, indeed, lose its identity. For not only does such an assumption remove the distinction between the Church and the world, i.e. between redeemed and unredeemed life (which does not leave the Church with a distinct identity), but it makes the Church in fact coextensive with the world, with all mankind. There is then no place for a message from one to the other and no true ambassadorial function carrying God's appeal from one to the other. 2) The Christian message is lost. The eradication of the demarcation-line between the Church and the world does not allow for the statement that God "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" 3) to be understood in any other sense than that of an accomplished de facto salvation of all mankind. Thus, the concept of an

1) I John 4,3

2) see II Cor.5

3) Col.1,13

anonymous Christianity leads to the assumption that 'the kingdom of his beloved Son' comprises all mankind: through their mutual identification with the whole of the human race, the Church and the Kingdom have become identical and coextensive in a concept of universal salvation. But Col.1,13 o a n n o t be so understood. It presupposes and implies the continued existence of 'the dominion of darkness'. It does not even hint at the removal or annihilation of the 'dominion of darkness' from the earth. It is part of a letter which addresses itself to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colossae," (1,2) who have been 'transferred' themselves and are "now reconciled," (1,22) "p r o v i d e d" that they "continue in the faith." (1,23) So they are asked, "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?" (2,20) For it is they who are to set their minds "on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (3,2)

Can one escape from the conclusion that the blending of the Church with the world and of the 'kingdom of his beloved Son' with the rule of Christ over all mankind in the here and now makes the Church 'belong to the world' and the King a ruler over 'things that are on earth'?

This is the risk which Prof. Rahner takes when he insists that "the Christian sees anonymous Christianity at

work in a thousand ways in his brother," 1) and that the anonymous Christian "does not really know what he actually is through grace in the depths of his conscience; that is, that the anonymous Christian is, in perhaps a very implicit but nevertheless in a very real way, what the Christian also is, though for his part the Christian is aware of what he is in the objective reflexiveness of his conscience." 2)

When we consider this concept of the anonymous Christian together with Rahner's claim of the uncertainty of salvation for the Christian, we are left with the impression that the Church is merely an outcropping of a hidden universal reality, "something like the uniformed units in God's array," 3) and that the conscious acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in the obedience of faith has nothing to add to man's salvation but the "fear and trembling" of Phil. 2! This, then, reduces the Church to merely one of the phenomena in the realm of man's religions. The presence of Christ becomes immersed in the anonymity of an assumed universal Christianity, so that his grace "is ultimately the dynamism of all human history everywhere and always, and indeed of the world generally..." 4)

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.61

2) ibid. p.57

3) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.84

4) ibid. p.96

The impatience for the eschatological fullness of his reign has then led to the identification of his kingship with the power behind the torrent of human struggles. The King of kings has become merely another king over the affairs of the human race.

When our salvation has thus become inherent in our being human, what is to prevent us from taking the final step of eliminating the transcendence of God altogether and cutting through the vertical communion with Him by bringing our encounter with Jesus Christ entirely down to the horizontal plane of interhuman relationships? We hesitate to contend that Rahner is on the verge of being caught in that monstrous contradictio in terminis, Christian humanism. But what are we to make of his statement, "God is manifested for us through Christ in mankind and thus is for us only so attainable"? 1) Does that not bring us back to the proud godlessness of man's religious search for the divine within himself? Is that not exactly the cul-de-sac, the blind alley, in which Jesus confronted his disciples and said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you"? 2) "The Bible does not describe the religious history of man as a quest for God, but as divine seeking after man"! 3) I do not know

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.25

2) John 15,16

3) Hendrik Kraemer, THE COMMUNICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (Philadelphia, 1956), p.20

myself until I know myself to be known by God. Kraemer says that "the point constantly stressed in the Bible is that God alone knows man in his inner motives and being, and that therefore the knowledge of self goes through the knowledge of God, and not the reverse." 1) If only so I can know myself for what I am by the grace of God, - how could I possibly come face to face with God in my fellow-man, unless we are side by side in that we b o t h know ourselves to be known by God! That is, how much and how deeply do I need to stand with him before the God and Father of Jesus Christ, that we both may say, 'My Father', before I can turn to him with that word which fulfills my longings as much as his, 'My Brother'! To put it in the words of Dr. James S. Smart, "The Church is the human fellowship that comes into being when God binds men to himself in Christ and so binds them to each other." 2) This is what George W. Webber has summed up when he writes, "Mark that the vertical dimension is always first. Human beings are made one as brothers only because Christ is their Lord. There is much too much sentimental talk about the brotherhood of man. This has no reality, for me at least, and I think not for the Christian church, apart from the prior acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is our point of unity." 3)

1) loc. cit. p.14

2) James S. Smart, op. cit. p.90

3) George W. Webber, GOD'S COLONY IN MAN'S WORLD (New York, 1960), p.49

E. JOHN MACQUARRIE - "PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY."

1. THE CONCEPT OF NOTHING.

A most impressive example of a theology which has moved away from these biblical concepts is John Macquarrie's book "PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY". 1) He conceives of God as Being, of the love of God as his act of pouring forth himself in creation, reconciliation and consummation, which is a "letting-be" toward a never-ending realization of the potentialities of being. In this letting-be of all created beings, Being has taken the risk of placing them in "the dependence of the beings at all times on Being that lets them be." 2) Where and inasmuch as this is the case, the creation shows its goodness, so that evil becomes a regression from being toward nothingness. "These beings have been created out of nothing, and it is possible for them to slip back into nothing or to advance into the potentialities for being which belong to them. Evil is this slipping back toward nothing, a reversal and defeat of the creative process." 3) "...God risks himself, so to speak, with the nothing; he opens himself and pours himself out into nothing."

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY, (London, 1966).

2) ibid. p.219

3) ibid. p.234

His very essence is to let be, to confer being. He lets be by giving himself, for he is Being; and in giving himself in this way, he places himself in jeopardy, for he takes the risk that Being may be dissolved in nothing." 1)

We are inclined to question this approach, which is basic to Macquarrie's theology, on two counts.

First, it seems doubtful to us whether the concept of the 'nothing' lends itself to play any part at all in either philosophy or theology. Whatever associations it may conjure up in one's mind or imagination, there is for the human mind simply no way of grasping the concept of non-existence, non-activity, non-being, non-thought, - nothingness. Not only would one have to reach beyond and behind the limitations set to the human mind in its sinful imperfection to grasp such an absolute negation. One would have to reach beyond and behind creation itself. One would have to think one's way out of existence, - and existence is at the same time the scope and delimitation of all thought.

Furthermore, assuming that this were possible, how could we conceive of the nothing and Being at the same time, a side-by-side of existence and non-existence in a primordial way? For if we were to postulate such a side-by-side, Being, which must of necessity be understood as identical with life and, therefore, with activity, would then have to 'be', i.e. to function at the primordial level centri-

1) loc. cit. p.234

petally, turned in upon itself. Only so could there be any differentiation between Being and nothing without the one cancelling out the other. Only so could there be a subsequent pouring out of itself by Being into nothing, a taking any risk 'that Being may be dissolved in nothing.' If however, as we contend, the concept of the nothing can only be derived from this primordial side-by-side and if, without this primordial situation, there cannot be a vis-à-vis of Being and the nothing in which God 'opens himself into nothing,' then we have already left behind us all possibilities of speaking about either God or nothingness. For here we are behind creation, beyond our own existence and, therefore, beyond the categories of thought accessible to us. As Prof. Macquarrie himself puts it, "Without beings in and through which it appears and in which it is present, Being would be indistinguishable from nothing," 1) and "....since pure Being would be indistinguishable from nothing, Being is inseparable from beings." 2) In other words, we can only know Being and conceive of being as it is manifest to us in what Macquarrie calls 'existents', i.e. creatures. He, therefore, would agree that it is impossible for us to think our way out of creation and that our concept of God is confined within the context of creation. Yet, the notion of the nothing forces this leap beyond the boundaries

1) loc. cit. p.187

2) ibid. p.194

of creation. It is only conceivable alongside a concept of Being, i.e. God, in a primordial side-by-side. At that point Being and nothing become, indeed, indistinguishable and we are left with neither one nor the other. We have lost all knowledge of God. We have lost God. To quote Macquarrie's own verdict, "The God of the Christian faith is not a God who is undifferentiated self-enclosed Being - indeed, it is doubtful if such Being could be called 'God', and certainly we could never know anything about it." 1)

Therefore, when the side-by-side becomes a vis-à-vis, when Being is thought of as projecting itself into and pouring itself out into nothing, immediately the mind boggles at the effort to maintain the concept of nothing as the absence of the presence of anything, be it space, time, life or being. Apparently we have neither the thought-categories nor the linguistic concepts by which we can establish any notion of absolute absence, - nothingness. The very notion that God "opens himself and pours himself out into nothing" 2) cannot but establish the 'nothing' as s o m e t h i n g toward which God c a n open himself and into which he c a n pour out himself. Macquarrie's problem at this point is not one of semantics, as if he could have expressed himself more adequately, but one of postulating a concept which is inconceivable. He argues

1) loc. cit. p.194

2) ibid. p.234

from the fact of creation to a notion of non-creation, which is not capable of being conceived at all because the conceivability of everything and anything depends itself upon its existence and, therefore, cannot proceed from its non-existence. To differentiate between 'nothing' and 'the' nothing in order to be able to say that 'the nothing' does exist, seems to offer no solution because in either case we have to do with non-existence from which it is not possible to derive any concept whatsoever. It would be self-defeating to say that 'the nothing', i.e. non-existence exists, which is clearly a contradictio in terminis. Yet, this seems to be exactly what Prof. Macquarrie is doing in laying the basis for his Principles of Christian Theology! One might say that he has overreached himself and has broken through the ceiling that lies over human reason. In doing so one cannot but lose all connection with life, existence or being as we can think it, know it or experience it. If we may be permitted to put it very simply but quite emphatically: One cannot talk about nothing. The moment one opens one's mouth, one has to be talking about s o m e t h i n g! Five hundred years before the Christian Era, the Greek Parmenides based much of his philosophy on that fact and stated, "One cannot know that which does not exist - that is impossible - nor put it into words." 1)

1) Bertrand Russell, GESCHIEDENIS DER WESTERSE FILOSOFIE (Den Haag, 1948), p.61

Without wishing to open up the whole question of the doctrine of creation, one might ask whether Prof. Macquarrie has not been led in the wrong direction by a too facile acceptance of the idea that God created the world out of nothing. 1) He seems to take it for granted, as indeed he must if he is to maintain that God's creative activity is a pouring forth of himself into nothing. In another book he speaks of God's omnipotence as "the power to stand out from nothing and to b e, or perhaps one should say, rather, the power to let something stand out from nothing and to be (creatio ex nihilo)."

2) This unquestioning acceptance of the concept of creation from nothing may well have prevented Macquarrie from seeing the impossibility of his proposition. But the doctrine of the 'creatio ex nihilo' belongs to a post-biblical speculative theology and is not properly part of biblical theology at all, but rather a philosophical sidetrack. The biblical writers are not concerned with what would or would not be outside the scope of God's creative power, nor do they try to fathom by what categories of thought or speech man might give expression to the negative of God's creation or the situation before or behind his creative activity. The need for the salvation of their existence is far too great to

1) see John Macquarrie, THE NEW THOMAS AQUINAS, (London, 1966), pp. 123-124. SECULARITY (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 123

2) John Macquarrie, NEW DIRECTIONS IN THEOLOGY TODAY, Vol. III, GOD AND SECULARITY (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 123

allow them to speculate about the absence of being. They praise God as their Creator not because he is their Creator, but because he is their Redeemer, as Psalm 33 so movingly shows. To the psalmist "the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD." (vs. 5) A without-God-ness, i.e. 'the nothing', has no place at all in what these men have to say. To them, even when faced with God's wrath and judgment, "the whole earth is full of his glory," 1) and there is no reason whatsoever for them to probe beyond that. In spite of Macquarrie's claim that whatever is said in "explication of the Christian faith...must be rooted in the Bible," 2) he has not caught the implications of the biblical attitude toward the Creator for the concept of a 'creatio ex nihilo'. For if he had been aware of them, he would not have been able to endeavour to penetrate behind Being itself to a without-God-ness, a 'nothing', which - within the realm of created life - has no conceptual possibility at all. In the Bible, however, when the whole spectrum of creation, redemption and consummation unfolds before the inspired writer's eyes (as is the case at the end of Rom.11), there is only room for a doxology: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." So great, then, is this God, that it becomes

1) Is.6,3

2) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.162

impossible to bypass him in order to grasp a 'nothing' behind him. Rather than say that he created the world out of nothing, we affirm in awe, 'he created the world from his fullness!' If, however, we were to affirm that God created the world from nothing, it would be without any connection with a concept of nothingness. To us, "the word 'ex' in creatio ex nihilo signifies the aloneness of God in the bringing forth of the world. There was not even a 'nothing' besides God, but God only." 1) We must, therefore, conclude, that one of the basic assumptions of John Macquarrie's "Principles of Christian Theology" has no conceptual possibility and proves untenable.

1) Emil Brunner, DIE CHRISTLICHE LEHRE VON SCHÖPFUNG UND ERLOESUNG, DOGMATIK BAND II (Zürich, 1950), pp.11,12

2. THE RISK OF GOD.

Secondly, the starting point for God's dealings with man in Macquarrie's theology is the risk inherent in God's creative activity. Here is the basis for his claim that creation, reconciliation, and consummation are co-extensive, interwoven and in themselves "only distinguishable aspects of one awe-inspiring movement of God - his love or letting-be...". 1) This 'risk' also is the explanation of evil as a "slipping back toward nothing, a reversal..." 2) At this point we must ask, just what constitutes this risk? Is it proper to speak of a 'risk' at all? What is it that God has risked? Has he really placed himself in jeopardy? Has he exposed himself to the possibility of his own existence becoming non-existence? It would seem that Macquarrie claims that this is so when he writes that God "places himself in jeopardy, for he takes the risk that Being may be dissolved in nothing," 3) and that "the risk is that Being may get lost in nothing." 4) Yet he shrinks from the consequences of this statement and, in dealing with the metaphor of the sun which "enlivens the

1) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.247

2) ibid. p.234

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.198

earth by burning up its own substance," he warns, "The simile must not be pushed too far; the sun will eventually burn out, we suppose, but we believe that God's resources are not limited, and that he will go on spending himself in love..." 1)

Then what is it that is risked in God's creative/reconciling/consummating activity? It is not God? Is it being, flowing from God? If it is not God who is 'risked', in how far is this 'being' divine? And if it is not, where does that leave us in regard to the statement that the creative process is in that God "pours himself out into nothing"? Does God risk himself a little at a time? If consummation is an integral part of creation, is there any risk at all? Can one really speak of a risk of Being when the threat to being is nothing? Must the essence of absence, 'the nothing' pose a risk in any other sense than that it poses a risk that is not there? Should not Macquarrie base his certainty that consummation is inherent in creation on a risk that is absent because it is posed by 'the nothing' and, therefore, on the a b s e n c e of risk? Then, why speak of a risk at all?

We are inclined to come to the conclusion that neither the concept of 'the nothing' nor the 'risk' of a dissolution of Being in nothing are presuppositions (and that is obviously what they are!) which allow us to draw any

1) loc. cit. p.235

conclusions from them whatsoever.

Nevertheless, one must admire the integrity and intellectual acumen with which Prof. Macquarrie puts forth his theology on such an ethereal basis. Only on occasion we are faced with a bafflingly conventional statement which seems to be ill fitted to the profound contemporary otherness of his monumental "PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY". - as for instance when he speaks of the "reconciling ministry of the Church, begun in baptism when original sin is forgiven"! 1)

In general, however, he has pursued his train of thought with great cohesion. It is, therefore, important for this study to enquire further into his views of salvation and eschatology in order to find what are his views regarding the relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God.

1) loc. cit. p.429

3. THE FALL OF GOD.

Prof. Macquarrie has taken Tillich's expression for God as the 'Ground of Being' a step further. Kraemer criticized Tillich's term in 1955, asking, "if God is called 'Ground of Being' does there remain a real possibility of clear distinction between Being and its Ground, which is more than verbal declaration, and which really allows a relation? Is not ontological philosophy always driven towards deification of Being...?" 1) Macquarrie is exactly at this point and comes here, even more than Tillich, within range of Kraemer's criticism, "In Biblical context you m u s t say the 'Creator of Being'." 2) Macquarrie does not say that. Hence, the biblical drama of salvation in his theology becomes an ontological shadow-play, in which the I-Thou collision and reconciliation between man and God is absorbed by man's evolution toward Being or his slipping away from it. The crisis-character of reconciliation and consummation, which is essential to the biblical message, has disappeared because God is understood as the essence of what is, in that all that is, is the pouring forth of himself into the nothing. Although

1) Hendrik Kraemer, RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (London, 1955), p.435

2) ibid. p.436

one can still maintain that in this pouring forth he is the Creator, he cannot in this context be the Creator in the biblical sense, who creates by his word, who stands, therefore, over against his creation as its Judge and its Redeemer. He must, together with all being, justify his existence before the bar of ontological philosophy, where the theology of this Theos will stand or fall under the scrutiny of human reason. Macquarrie must, therefore, base his theology of the Christian faith (his 'symbolical' theology) on 'philosophical' theology, which occupies the first part of his book. "Philosophical theology may be thought of as an inquiry into the possibility of any theology whatsoever." It "seeks to show us what is the logic of theological discourse, or perhaps to show us whether it has a coherent logic at all." 1) It is "foundational theology." 2) "It lays bare the concepts of theology and investigates the conditions that make any theology possible." 3) Only after that can Macquarrie proceed to Part II, 'Symbolical Theology', dealing with whatever "belongs to the specific faith of the Christian Church. ... the core of theology." 4) There is then no turning away from the course once set: "This book will adhere to the ideal of a

1) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.39

2) ibid. p.35

3) ibid. p.35

4) ibid. p.36

reasonable faith... which has exposed itself to the scrutiny and testing of critical and corrective reason and has survived. Faith must be shown to be compatible with reason.... To show this belongs to the function of philosophical theology." 1)

Although Prof. Macquarrie states that "any explication of the Christian faith... must be rooted in the Bible," 2) it is inevitable and, indeed, clear from the start that the teaching of the Bible must yield wherever it militates against the dictates of 'critical and corrective reason' and that it must be denied any claim to exclusiveness as the message of salvation. So Macquarrie comments on the notion of substitutionary punishment: "This view of atonement, as it has usually been expressed, is an example of the kind of doctrine which, even if it could claim support from the Bible or the history of theology, would still have to be rejected because of the affront which it offers to reason and conscience." 3) In how far this concept is biblical or whether it is all that the Bible has to say about the cross of Christ, we leave aside. What is striking in this quotation is the undauntedness with which the author is prepared to set aside whatever the Bible may teach if it does not meet the standards he has chosen to apply to its

1) loc. cit. p.40

2) ibid. p.162

3) ibid. p.284

message. With equal readiness he dismisses the uniqueness of the biblical revelation. "Anthropologists investigated the religion of primitive man, and it became clear that all religions, including biblical religion, have arisen out of primitive ideas and practices.anthropology does suggest a continuity among all religions. ... There becomes apparent a unity underlying all the diverse religions." 1) ".... other faiths too have a revelation that comes from the one God, and that can be therefore only a revelation that likewise leads to reconciliation." 2)

On this basis the distinction between redeemed and unredeemed life once again must disappear. In fact, it leaves no room for a lostness which comes under God's judgment because the 'unity underlying all the diverse religions' is given with the contention that all being is the act of God's pouring forth of himself into the nothing. Under this viewpoint one cannot but find revelation of God among all men, even in all that is. The ultimate destiny of all men becomes 'christhood'. "...we may think of christhood as the limit of manhood, or the point where it passes into God-manhood." 3) It is "the goal toward which created existence moves." 4) As a 'limit' it is not a

1) loc. cit. p.157

2) ibid. p.292/3

3) ibid. p.346

4) ibid. p.276

delimitation but the point at which manhood enters God-manhood. To this point moves all being, in spite of the Fall. For man's sin may hamper this movement; it cannot undo it. "We may believe that God is good, and that his providence works to advance the conquest of nothing by Being." 1)

What then is the significance of sin and evil? According to Prof. Macquarrie it is that of a calculated risk and its occurrence is the cost of God's self-giving. So sin and evil become inherent in the process of being moving to christhood. The consequence of this is that they cease - if not to disturb us - to amaze us. What has occurred is what Kraemer points out as the "mistake of all monistic philosophy", namely that "it takes the world as it is as n o r m a l. The truth is that the world as it is, is a b n o r m a l, fallen, lying under the curse of sin and of the wrath of God, as it is expressed in ordinary Biblical language." 2) And Kraemer quotes Gunning, the Dutch theologian, writing in 1876(!): "We cannot say with Spinoza: God is the Ground of the World (Being).... Because the world is created, is produced, it has a non-divine ground, which just for this reason c a n become ungodly." 3)

1) loc. cit. p.235

2) Hendrik Kraemer, op. cit. p.437

3) ibid. p.436 comp. J. H. Gunning, SPINOZA EN DE IDEE DER PERSOONLIJKHEID (1876)

Macquarrie comes to the view that evil is inherent in creation by positing the essential oneness of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, and consummation, their being side by side instead of forming a sequence. "Creation, reconciliation, and consummation are not three successive activities of God, still less could we think that he has to engage in reconciliation because creation was unsuccessful. The three indeed are represented successively in the narrative presentation of the Christian faith, but theologically they must be seen as three moments in God's great unitary action. Creation, reconciliation, and consummation are not separate acts but only distinguishable aspects of one awe-inspiring movement of God - his love or letting-be, whereby he confers, sustains, and perfects the being of the creatures." "It is not that at a given moment God adds the activity of reconciliation to his previous activities, or that we can set a time when his reconciling activity began." Therefore, reconciliation is "an activity that is equi-primordial with creation itself..." "... and is inseparable from his creating activity. This means not only that the two are coextensive in time, but also that they are coextensive in extent, so that ... God's saving activity is universal." 1) This makes reconciliation a corollary of creation, inherent in it because creation is the act of God's self-giving which finds its climax in the self-giving

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), pp.247-248

of Christ into death. It is essential to creation, as is consummation, because creation itself is 'costly' to God. "Just as the sun warms and enlivens the earth by burning up its own substance, so it must be at real cost to himself that God creates, reconciles, consummates. Such, at any rate, would seem to be implied in any understanding of God that looks to the cross of Christ for the center of revelation." 1) "There must be a tragic element in the whole creative process." 2) "Hence some kind of 'cosmic fall' seems to be inherent in the very notion of creation, and some kind of natural evil seems to be necessary." 3) Indeed, the world, 'fallen, lying under the curse of sin and of the wrath of God', is taken as it is as normal! Normal in the sense that it is as it should be, must be and ever will be! This must lead to two conclusions. First, if reconciliation is a corollary of creation, then so is sin. We mean not just the possibility of sin, but the occurrence and the act of sin itself. Secondly, if this be so, the conclusion that consummation is at one with creation and reconciliation in God's 'great unitary action' and that God's action, therefore, must issue in the Kingdom of God, i.e. for man in 'christhood', 'God-manhood', is the merest speculation, dangerously close to wishful thinking.

1) loc. cit. p.235

2) loc. cit.

3) ibid. p.236

As to the first conclusion, we may leave what Macquarrie calls 'natural evil', the catastrophic occurrences which are clearly beyond human control, for what it is. The issue centers on voluntary evil, evil by choice, namely sin. "The risk becomes acute when the universe brings forth beings, such as man, who have responsibility and a limited freedom..." 1) But the risk is not a risk at all. It is a certainty, that sin and being are co-existent. And not only so, but they must be co-existent forever in this theological scheme.

This becomes evident when the sequence in which Macquarrie has set creation, reconciliation and consummation, is changed. For if we reverse that sequence - consummation, reconciliation, creation - or change it to: reconciliation, creation, consummation, we find that neither consummation nor creation remain to be real possibilities. The three are according to Macquarrie co-extensive, aspects of the one 'movement' of God's 'great unitary action' and not separate acts. Now, if we say that reconciliation is co-extensive with consummation, we are in effect saying that there is no such thing as consummation, i.e. "all things gathered up in God, all things brought to the fulfillment of their potentialities for being." 2) Consummation does not only become tentative (as in realized

1) loc. cit. p.183

2) ibid. p.320

eschatology), - it becomes impossible. Likewise, if we say that creation is co-extensive with reconciliation, we are in effect saying that creation is inseparably bound up with sinfulness and dependent on being co-existent with sin. Thereby creation does not only become imperfect (as with Origen), - it becomes self-destructive. For in this scheme of things sinfulness is to be understood as a regression of being toward nothing. Creation, therefore, becomes at one and the same time the extension (the pouring forth) of Being and the dissolution of being into nothing.

In the context of Macquarrie's theology it should make no difference whether we speak of creation, reconciliation, consummation, or: consummation, reconciliation, creation, or: reconciliation, consummation, creation. But, in fact, it does make a difference to the point where any change in the sequence tends to destroy the basic assumptions on which his understanding of the Christian gospel is built, namely that creation, reconciliation and consummation are co-extensive and are aspects of God's 'great unitary action'. For twenty centuries Christian theologians have dealt with the concepts of creation, reconciliation and consummation side by side. Macquarrie's consistent use of these terms in that order tends to create the impression that he is dealing with them in the context of the mainstream of Christian theology. As long as they are used in that same order, it is not immediately evident that to understand

them to be co-existent and co-extensive moves them entirely out of the framework of the Christian faith; they have been used side by side so long! In fact, the moment we pour our thoughts into the mold of a sequence, we are i m p l y i n g an actual sequence. Traditionally, these terms have been understood to be just that.

The constant use of the sequence: creation, reconciliation, consummation in Macquarrie's work, ironically, tends to hide the fact that these terms are Christian if and as long as they are understood to be sequential - and in that order. He can, therefore, speak of them as being co-existent and co-extensive. However, when the sequence is rearranged - as should then be possible and pose no problems - we find that to posit that they are co-existent and co-extensive does two things: it destroys the Christian hope of the Kingdom of God, i.e. consummation, and it makes the creative activity of God, the letting-be of Being, creative of sin. Moreover, Macquarrie holds that "in a fallen humanity, every individual must be caught in this declination." 1) He also contends that, "since pure Being would be indistinguishable from nothing, Being is inseparable from beings." 2) "As both transcendent and immanent, God is at once beyond every possible being, yet present and

1) loc. cit. p.244

2) ibid. p.194

manifest in every one of these beings." 1) Consequently, insofar as He is immanent, yet at the same time is o n e and not two (not a God of immanence alongside a God of transcendence), God Himself is caught in the regression from being toward nothing. Macquarrie puts it this way: "We talk of 'risk' because in this process Being could become split, fragmented, torn within itself." 2) But the risk - if reconciliation is a corollary of creation - is not a possibility but a certainty. Sin has laid hold of God! Macquarrie has gone the distance on the path on which he finds Origen. "We did indeed agree that there is a tragic element in the creative process, and presumably man, as creature, shares in this. There is this much truth in the view of Origen and others who have thought of creation as itself a kind of fall." 3) Creation, in Macquarrie's theology, has become the Fall of God!

It follows that to posit the certainty of consummation is a leap in the dark of the most haphazard kind. For if Being in the very act of letting-be (which is thought of as the essence of its existence) is 'torn within itself', once again no possibility of a concept of consummation remains. In fact, all that can have any weight of logic at that point is the acceptance of the eventual dissolution of all being

1) loc. cit. p.187

2) ibid. p.183

3) ibid. p.242

into nothing. For if Being itself, i.e. God, is once thought of as torn within itself, split and fragmented, one can dream of the undoing of that fragmentation in a consummation, but one cannot argue that it must occur. The opposite is, indeed, firmly given with the contention that reconciliation "is equiprimordial with creation itself." 1) Being is undone. God is dead.

1) loc. cit. p.247

4. DISINTEGRATION OF THEOLOGY.

From this point onward, there is no possibility of a return to a true encounter between God and man, no room for an I-Thou relationship and no reality to either rejection or loving acceptance of one by the other. Biblical categories become sterile. What seems to be Macquarrie's dialectical treatment of theological concepts becomes self-contradictory and ceases to be true dialectic. He states that the (biblical) symbols "must always be used dialectically (that is to say, at once affirmed and denied)," 1) but in fact his affirmations and denials of the symbols, instead of complementing and illuminating each other in the dialectical sense, cancel each other out, as in the case of creation. For there the letting-be of Being means at the same time the pouring forth of Being and the opening up of the course toward the dissolution of Being, because creation and reconciliation are equiprimordial. When this paradox is carried to its conclusion, we find that God is dead. In other words, because there is no balance between the conceivable and the inconceivable, the Being and the nothing, the dialectic is lost and the whole idea becomes inconceivable.

As the encounter between God and man is basic to

1) loc. cit. p.258

everything Christian, the biblical concepts and categories must lose their meaning without it. For this reason it is not surprising that we find in Macquarrie's work

creation without perfection,
 sin without guilt,
 atonement without forgiveness,
 demons without reality,
 death without resurrection,
 judgment without perdition,
 salvation without a Saviour, and
 the Kingdom without a King.

Let us look at this sequence briefly because of the awful indictment it posits in regard to this theology, namely that it is alien to the Christian faith.

Creation without perfection.

There can obviously be no perfection in a creation to which sin is inherent and in which creative and reconciling activity of the Creator are coextensive. This is what Macquarrie teaches when he says that "natural evil and human sin are alike unavoidable possibilities in a creation the end of which is good." 1) In passing we note that speaking of 'unavoidable possibilities' cannot circumvent but merely seems to hide the fact that one is really speaking of inevitability and, therefore, of certainty!

1) loc. cit. p.245

Sin without guilt.

In vain do we look for the biblical concept of guilt in Macquarrie's treatment of sin. There is no trace of the need for "a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." 1) The closest Prof. Macquarrie comes to this notion is in maintaining the responsibility of man for his sin, when he says that "sin is a slavery for the race and for the individual, yet a slavery that has arisen through voluntary decision." 2) "Even if in individual cases there is no deliberate conscious decision of this kind, this does not take away responsibility." 3) But nowhere do we find that this responsibility implies guilt. There is no reference to the need for the prayer, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." 4) Instead, we find on one hand that "the basic alienation is really from oneself," 5) so that man faces toward himself in his guiltiness, - on the other hand man's sin "is not to be understood in an individualistic way but is to be seen in all its seriousness as the massive and wrongful orientation of human society." 6) And "the collective mass of mankind in its solidarity, is

1) Ps.51,17

2) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.244

3) ibid. p.243

4) Ps.51,4

5) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.62

6) ibid. p.240

answerable to no one.... individuals are, as it were, sucked into the world and carried along with it, being deprived of their own responsibility and swept along by forces beyond their control." 1) Either way, the concept of guilt within a person-to-person relationship is lost from the picture.

Atonement without forgiveness.

Atonement can, therefore, not enter into what relationship between God and man is left in Macquarrie's thinking. What he describes as atonement remains outside a possible encounter of man with God. It becomes entirely impersonal, if not abstract. He calls his view the 'classic view of atonement.' It conceives of the work of Jesus "as a battle against the demons that afflict the life of man. His finished work on the cross is his complete triumph over these demonic, enslaving powers." 2) It would seem that Christ is here portrayed as the one who breaks the power of demons in such a way that they henceforth are unable to hold sway over any man whose life is by faith committed to him. In the description of how Christ obtained that victory we read, "to refuse to idolize any being....is to break the dominion of demons, and to put them to flight." 3) But

1) loc. cit. p.240

2) ibid. p.287

3) ibid. p.288

careful reading reveals that Jesus Christ in his death on the cross saved nobody but himself! When he rejects making worldly power his ultimate concern (worshipping Satan), he puts the demons to flight from his own existence. "This Christ finally does in giving himself utterly in the passion and death. ... One's own self is the last idol, and to give even oneself unreservedly is indeed to have become like God and to have vanquished the last demon." 1) The similarity of this victory with the achievement of Gautama Buddha is so striking, that one can only suspect that it would require an intellectual tour de force to see in him more than the Enlightened One, the Pathfinder, the High and Holy One, who cannot do anything at all for his followers but beckon from his lofty perch of God-manhood: come and climb the heights I have climbed. See the path I have taken. This is the way. This is the truth. This is the life!

None of which he is and none of which he says. Instead, he says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." 2)

This he cannot be in Macquarrie's 'classic view of atonement'. To maintain, then, that he is nevertheless the Saviour of the world, requires a tour de force indeed. We do not read to whom he gives himself. Conspicuously absent

1) loc. cit. p.288

2) John 14,6

is especially the notion that he did not give himself to death, but instead vanquished death in his resurrection. In fact, Macquarrie has previously made the startling statement (startling in its almost complete reversal of the New Testament emphasis), that in the period after the death of Jesus "faith is born that God is indeed self-giving love and that life is truly attained through death, and this is the Easter faith." 1) It is, therefore, a mystery how Prof. Macquarrie can summarize the work of Christ as follows; "Man has fallen into the grip of dark powers; Christ comes into this situation, and battles against these powers; with his cross comes the overwhelming victory, bringing deliverance and new life to man." 2) No less incomprehensible is his conclusion that "this is a work o n b e h a l f o f man, a work of grace. It not only makes a demand (as an example does) but it lays hold on the human race, empowers a change of direction, brings the dynamic activity of God into the midst of human society." 3) The connection with Christ's self-giving and his 'victory' by dying simply has not been laid, not to mention the question whether such a victory by dying represents more than a flight from further possibilities of idolizing the self, making it demonic!

It is now clear that the factor of forgiveness does

1) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.266

2) ibid. p.287

3) ibid. p.289

not even enter this view of atonement and that atonement is thought of as the act of putting the demons to flight.

Demons without reality.

At the same time, although at one point Macquarrie admits to the possibility that there are "quasi-personal beings of superhuman power who direct that power to evil ends," 1) he rejects the idea that man's salvation had anything to do with a struggle against such beings. "We must not be misled by the mythological language of a triumph over the principalities and powers, as if some objectively existing demons had been destroyed by Christ two thousand years ago, so that they would never trouble man again. If the demonic is simply the escalated evil that springs from idolatry, then man is continually threatened by the demonic, and the victory must be won over and over again..." 2) We are, then, left with a concept of demons that are the projection of an idolatrous human mind and we hesitate to give expression to what that means in regard to the dying Jesus putting demons to flight!

Death without resurrection.

Macquarrie, like Bultmann, has made the cross of Christ the central and decisive event of his life. He links the

1) loc. cit. p.241

2) ibid. pp.291/292

ascension of Jesus directly with the cross: "these two are opposite sides of the same event." 1) There is then no room for the resurrection at all. As we have seen, the Easter faith, to John Macquarrie, is "that life is truly attained through death." 2) Of the resurrection stories he must therefore say, "Even if such stories could be proved to be veridical accounts of observed events, they would not in the least establish that God had acted in these events, for no such evidence is relevant to such a question." 3) What happened, then, at Christ's death, was his deification, his "being 'taken up' into Godhood." 4) Similarly, "What took place in the Christ who, by utterly giving himself, 'ascended' to be with God, is destined to take place in all mankind, following in the way of his cross and resurrection." 5) Therefore, "the victory must be won over and over again." 6) It can no longer escape us that an expression as 'his cross and resurrection', together with a number of other quite biblical sounding phrases, in the context of this theology becomes meaningless, as what 'is destined to take place in all mankind' includes a

1) loc. cit. p.266

2) loc. cit.

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.325

5) loc. cit.

6) ibid. p.292

resurrection in the biblical sense as little as the theory of Jesus' 'victory' on the cross allows. What is left is the idea that "the individual existence may be taken up into the vaster movement of Being." 1) To this end, death must lose its character of being "the last enemy to be destroyed." 2) Macquarrie has tried to bring this about. "Death," he says, "can have a positive, or affirmative, role in existence," and goes so far as to state that "Death becomes the e s c h a t o n." 3) "Death, in one sense destructive, is in another sense creative of unified, responsible selfhood...." 4) After this to claim that these considerations "do not in the slightest degree remove the negativity of death" 5) seems, far from being proper dialectic, to be cancelling out what is being contended about the nature of death on one hand as well as on the other. What has occurred, however, is that the element of judgment has been removed from death. It c a n be regarded as an evil and a punishment, i.e. as "the working out of sin in existence," 6) but Macquarrie in this connection does not go further than to speak of "the

1) loc. cit. p.325

2) I Cor.15.26

3) John Macquarrie, op. cit. p.68

4) ibid. p.69

5) ibid. p.70

6) ibid. p.244

disruption of selfhood" and the "lowest level of being." 1) Death is not even in its aspect of judgment understood as radical, for Macquarrie must safeguard the coextensiveness of creation, reconciliation and consummation in a creation "the end of which is good." 2) Much stress is consequently laid on the concept of death as inherent in finitude, so that death "as an end to life, would seem to be essential to any realization of selfhood, as has been argued in pointing to death as the e s c h a t o n of existence." 3) The resurrection does not enter this picture.

Judgment without perdition.

This leaves judgment without perdition, of which the Scriptures speak constantly in terms of death. Instead, God's judgment becomes a phase, a step forward in the process of the realization of the potentialities of Being for the beings. "Judgment can be thought of as a kind of sifting, whereby the distortions of evil are brought to defeat and dissolution and the tendencies toward authentic being are advanced." 4) "Belief in a final judgment is the hope that what is now ambiguous will resolve itself, and the advance of good over evil will decisively prevail."

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.245

3) ibid. p.243

4) ibid. p.325

"Judgment and grace, let us remember, are two sides of a single activity, and we have already seen reason to prefer 'universalism' to a doctrine of 'conditional immortality' and a fortiori to any doctrine of everlasting punishment." 1) This, of course, means that perdition is excluded and universalism the only concept of salvation that remains.

Salvation without a Saviour.

The terms which Macquarrie has employed in connection with death and judgment (death as the 'eschaton'; belief in a final judgment as the hope that what is now ambiguous will resolve itself) suggest that the letting-be of Being has to be understood as an opening up of possibilities and no more. In his excellent chapter "The Holy Spirit and Salvation" Prof. Macquarrie seems to depart from this premise at times to the extent of speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit not only in terms of the Bible, but also within the context of the pauline understanding of Christ's saving and renewing presence and the loving daily communion of the Christian with him. It is a most felicitously 'pastoral' chapter in his book. One would be tempted to lift it from the context of his "Principles of Christian Theology", were it not that the universality of the Spirit as unitive Being, "that is already immanent in man," 2) and

1) loc. cit. p.326

2) ibid. p.295

the detachment of the saving work of Christ from the life of the individual is maintained. Even in this chapter Christ's saving action remains enclosed in itself.

Although Macquarrie states, "This work of Christ, as we have seen, has both an objective and a subjective side," he continues, "Objectively, it is an event in world history, but more than that, it is an event of God's providential and revelatory acting." Simply that. The subjective side is merely the apprehension and realization that this is so. "It is only fully able to effect its reconciling intention, however, when it has been seen 'in depth' as an event of God's providence, and been subjectively accepted as such." 1) Thereby, the basis for the excellent description of the work of the Holy Spirit is not the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but the perception and apprehension by man of the fact that the Being within him leads man to the realization of the potentialities of being and toward the consummation of that potential in 'christhood' or God-manhood. So the work of the Holy Spirit, just as the work of Christ, is understood as the opening up of possibilities, and no more. It is left to man to act on the demand that "the victory must be won over and over again." 2) He must 'utterly give himself', 'ascend to be with God' in the same way as Christ. "What

1) loc. cit. p.294

2) ibid. p.292

took place in the Christ who, by utterly giving himself, 'ascended' to be with God, is destined to take place in all mankind, following the way of his cross and resurrection." 1) Lonesome salvation, - salvation without a Saviour!

The Kingdom without a King.

If we have shown above how in Macquarrie's theology the gospel of salvation curves away from Jesus Christ toward man, we must finally point to the absence of any ultimate and eternal relationship of Christ with his people in Macquarrie's treatment of 'The Last Things'. He shies away from the idea of consummation as a state of static perfection, and rightly so. But the dynamism of the 'end' does not consist in any interpersonal activity or relationship in which any kind of kingship or lordship of Christ or God has a place. Instead, what is said is so far removed from the warmth and affectionate longing for the coming of Christ in glory which is so explicit in the New Testament, that it seems altogether bloodless and lifeless, a phantastic though masterful projection of a concept of being, hurling itself into time and space in a never ending quest for fuller realization of its potentialities. Warning of the unavoidable inadequacy of language, Prof. Macquarrie visualizes "the emergence of primordial Being through expressive Being into time and history, yet in such a way

1) loc. cit. p.325

that through its self-outpouring from its original unbroken unity, a new and richer unity is all the time built up through unitive Being, a unity that with every creative outpouring becomes richer and fuller still. The end would be all things gathered up in God, all things brought to the fulfillment of their potentialities for being, at one among themselves and at one with Being from which they have come and for which they are destined. But this end too could not be thought of as a point that will eventually be reached, for at every point new vistas will open up." 1) This, then, is John Macquarrie's theology in a nutshell; this is also the definition of the kingdom of God which "really is the 'entelechy' of the cosmos." 2) There is no King.

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1) loc. cit. p.320

2) ibid. p.330

5. UNIVERSALIST CHRISTIANITY - AN IMPOSSIBILITY.

It will now be clear that some traditional theological notions are not to be found in the concepts of the Church and the Kingdom of God in Macquarrie's theology. We mention the belief that membership of the Church depends on an inner acceptance and trust in the vicarious death of Jesus as the Lamb of God, succumbing under the burden of the guilt of men; that to be part of the community of believers involves of necessity the awareness of and response in obedience to a closeness of the person of the risen Lord, made ever more intimate and inward by the Holy Spirit; that the presence of Christ among his followers, i.e. within the Church's communal life, is one of personality and communion with each and with all; that by this Presence the Church is being welded together as the communion of saints; that worship and prayer are a matter of actual communication with Him. In regard to the concept of the Kingdom of God we mention the belief that the Kingdom, though inaugurated by the victorious resurrection of Jesus within the world as it is, is as yet veiled and limited in its power and extent; that its full realization is linked with the return of Christ and will coincide with a divine judgment which will make distinction between those who are to be part of the Kingdom in its consummation and those who will not enter

into its glory; that the dead will rise, not as God-men, divine, but to a creaturely life, as subjects of the King, a life imperishable, in glory and in power; that those living at that point in history will undergo the same change in order to enter the Kingdom of God; that creation will be restored to perfection. These are notions which have, in some form or other, formed part of the theological heritage of the Church. Together with many others, they have no place in the scheme which Prof. Macquarrie so skillfully has developed.

Instead, we find that his concepts of the Church and the Kingdom have the same ethereal and highly speculative nature as his concepts of creation, being and incarnation.

Throughout his work Macquarrie is most consistent in stressing the equiprimordiality and coextensiveness of creation, reconciliation, and consummation and, therefore, of all that is inherent in any one of these three 'aspects' of the letting-be of Being. It is not surprising that we meet the effort to postulate the Church as given with creation itself. "The Church is a necessary stage in this great action of Being, so that to believe in creation is already to believe in the Church, and there is a sense in which the Church was there 'in the beginning' and is coeval with the world." 1) From here it is one step to the statement, "There always has been a community of faith in the

1) loc. cit. p.347

world, continuous with the Church, and its prototype; and there still is in the world a community of faith that stretches beyond the frontiers of the Church, in the narrow sense. For this reason too, one cannot draw a hard and fast line between the Church and the 'world'." 1) This is in keeping with his statement that "we declared ourselves persuaded of the truth of universalism..." 2)

However, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find what Macquarrie is teaching about the peculiar nature of the Church to be consistent with his avowed universalism. The non-Christian who might be looking for a radical breakdown of Christian claims to any exclusiveness of the Christian faith or of the status of the Christian Church, would come away quite disappointed. He would have to conclude that the holier-than-thou attitude which seems to him to be behind such claims has simply changed its terms, but breaks through the surface nevertheless. On one hand he can point to the concept of the 'wider community of faith'. He can refer to Macquarrie's statement that "reconciliation aims at the human race as a whole. It is as wide as creation, and potentially all men are embraced within its outreach. This may not mean that all men must explicitly accept the particular symbols of the Christian revelation. We have already made clear our conviction that

1) loc. cit. p.347

2) ibid. p.392

other faiths too have a revelation that comes from the one God, and that can be therefore only a revelation that likewise leads to reconciliation." 1) But on the other hand, the non-Christian can put his finger on such claims as, "This new community which itself began with the incarnation and with Christ's victory over the powers of sin and evil is the ever-expanding center in which Christ's reconciling work continues." 2) He can point to the claim that the incarnation and the reconciling work of Christ together with "the coming into being of the community" is "a simultaneous process." 3) He can conclude that the Church even in this theology is appropriating for itself once again a place of priority and exclusiveness when he reads, "What is distinctive about the Church is that it is the locus of God's acting, the agent by which he incarnates himself in the world," 4) "ever-expanding", to be sure, but the "center in which Christ's reconciling work continues," 5) nevertheless. He reads that "the Church is to be understood as the community in which this raising of manhood to God-manhood, which we see in Christ, continues." 6) And it will be no

1) loc. cit. pp.292/293

2) ibid. p.292

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.354

5) ibid. p.292

6) ibid. p.348

comfort to him that the Church is "to be thought of as a stage on the way from actual sinful humanity to the kingdom; as a kind of bridge between the place where humanity actually is and its destiny as the kingdom of God." 1) For, once again he is told by implication, that there is a raging torrent or a gaping chasm under that bridge and that the kingdom is not on his side, but on the other side extra ecclesiam nulla salus! For the Church is the bridge!

Prof. Macquarrie might answer that this is a misunderstanding of what he is trying to teach; that these statements have to be understood dialectically; that - because of the coextensiveness and simultaneity of reconciliation and consummation - they must be read alongside what he has written about the function and entelechy of the Church. It is our impression that the problem cannot be met that way, however. We do not find real dialectic when we place the different statements side by side. We find such wide divergence that once more they tend to cancel out each other, instead of qualifying each other. For the concept of the Church as the 'center in which Christ's reconciling work continues,' as a 'bridge between the place where humanity actually is and its destiny as the kingdom of God,' as 'a stage on the way' is not being qualified but becomes simply untenable when it is said, on the other hand, that the Church and the world are to become identified "in the

1) loc. cit. p.349

inclusive kingdom," 1) and that "The aim of the Church is not to w i n the world, but rather to identify itself with the world, even to lose itself in the world, in such a way as to bring nearer the kingdom in which the distinction of Church and world will be lost." 2)

It would seem to us that Macquarrie is trying to do two things. First, he is trying to maintain the identity of Christianity as a religion centred in Jesus Christ, as otherwise he would be hard put to maintain that his theology is a Christian theology at all. In order to do this, he must give to Jesus a certain pre-eminence, a supremacy in the area of revelation, a decisive role in the scheme of reconciliation. So he says that the Christian gospel "points to a new and decisive revelation," "in which the grace of Being would be openly shown and poured out," 3) and that the work of Christ "focuses and spearheads the universal reconciling work of God." 4) As we have seen, the Church is the "new community which itself began with the incarnation and with Christ's victory over the powers of sin and evil..." 5) the 'locus of God's acting.' "Thus the work of Christ, finished on the cross, while in one

1) loc. cit. p.350

2) ibid. p.393

3) ibid. p.248

4) ibid. p.293

5) ibid. p.292

sense a 'once-for-all' event of history, is at the same time an event for all times, an eschatological event that continues in the community of faith." 1) Here then, namely in the Church, "empowered by the unitive Being of the Holy Spirit operating through the revelatory event of the cross, the disciple commits himself in faith, that is to say, rejects the temptations of idolatry and gives himself in love." 2) But this is to Macquarrie the realization of selfhood, the point at which we find the potentialities of being consummated and at which manhood is transferred into God-manhood! By the effort to maintain the identity of Christianity as a religion centred in Jesus Christ, the Church cannot but become the vehicle and locus of reconciliation par excellence.

Secondly, Prof. Macquarrie is trying to undergird his universalism and to give it credence by equating Christianity with other religions. This means that, in view of the claims to superiority and exclusiveness which he could not help but making for Jesus Christ and his Church when he was dealing with Christianity as a separate entity, he must once more endeavour to do the impossible: he must suggest the essential unity of all religions by "the recognition that others are advancing to the same goal by different

1) loc. cit. p. 293

2) ibid. p. 292

routes." 1) Which means, if we may be permitted to use the vernacular, that 'we are all going to the same place!' To that a not very scholarly Christian might say, 'That's one place where I don't want to go!' - which may not be a very profound answer, but which certainly would be in keeping with Peter's claim, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 2) The removal of contrast and conflict between Christianity and other religions may seem to open up new vistas of brotherhood and unity for mankind, but if that means that we are to remove from Christianity that which makes the Christian faith Christian, then we are dealing with matters which cannot be removed without removing Christianity itself and, to quote the Encyclical "Humani Generis", "the removal of which would bring the union of all, but only to their destruction." 3)

Macquarrie seems to be putting great distance between his views and those of the apostle when he writes, "I do not think that the Christian missionary should aim at converting adherents of the so-called 'higher' religions in which, as I believe, God's saving grace is already

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.395

2) Acts 4,12

3) FOUR GREAT ENCYCLICALS OF POPE PIUS XII (New York, 1961), p.174

recognizably at work." 1) He uses as examples Martin Buber and Mahatma Gandhi - neither one of whom could very well be regarded as a typical adherent of his religion - to make the point that it would have served no purpose at all if they had become Christians. 2) Yet, even in these instances, or perhaps we should say: especially in cases like Buber and Gandhi, who is to say what tremendous difference it might have made? Macquarrie's contention is sheer guesswork. Besides, there is missing in this view the factor which has always been the corollary of Christian missionary zeal, namely the realization that in such cases the Church must face in humility the heartbreaking fact that she has not been equal to the task entrusted to her by her Lord, that she has failed him because she has failed such men: she has not been in sufficient measure the vehicle of his presence and the agent of his reconciliation. The attitude of dismissing the failure to win men to Christ in a decisive way as of no consequence seems to us to be entirely alien to the Christian faith. At this point it seems to be a flimsy excuse to argue that such men, too, are within the scope of God's saving grace. They are, of course; Romans 2 is explicit in this regard. But for the Church that is no excuse at all. Hers is the apostolic

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.394

2) ibid. p.394

attitude, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" 1)
That God's grace reaches beyond the borders of the Church
will be her comfort when she considers how much of mankind
has been beyond her reach and beyond her strength to
save. 2) But she cannot escape the responsibility for
those who have come within the scope of her pastoral and
missionary activity by entrenching herself in a univer-
salism which holds that God will in the end make up for
her failures!

Prof. Macquarrie certainly has no intention to adopt
this attitude. Yet he seems to be dangerously close to it
and may well be laying the foundation upon which others
could build it. In this regard, his concept of the mission
of the Church is of decisive significance. Referring to
his plea "for the recognition that God has not confined his
revelation to a single channel," 3) he candidly faces the
question, "Does this not take away the motivation that lies
behind mission?" 4)

It will be remembered that Karl Rahner argued that the
gospel is the offer to all men of the k n o w l e d g e of
their salvation, rather than the offer of salvation. The
Church would then be the visible manifestation of a much

1) I Cor.9,16

2) comp. I Cor.9,22

3) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
(London, 1966), p.392

4) loc. cit.

larger reality hidden in what he called 'anonymous Christianity'. He contended that it cannot be said that this view of the Church "will inevitably hamper or render ineffective the missionary zeal." 1) At that point we claimed that the notion that "it is possible to be a Christian even without knowing the name of Christ, or even while thinking that Christ must be rejected...." 2) cannot but do just that.

Prof. Macquarrie faces this fact. He says, "I think we must frankly say that some of the motives that impelled men to mission are no longer operative...." 3) He fails, however, to specify these motives. If he had, he would have found that his view that men of the great world religions 'are advancing to the same goal by different routes,' cuts the very heart out of the motivation for Christian mission. He comes to that point nevertheless. Although he states that "there can never be an end to the Christian mission that goes forth in loving service," 4) he qualifies this by saying, "But perhaps in the modern world the time has come for an end to the kind of mission that

1) Karl Rahner, THE CHRISTIAN OF THE FUTURE (Montreal, 1966), p.93

2) Karl Rahner, THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL (New York, 1966), p.58

3) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.392

4) ibid. p.393

proselytizes..." 1) Finally he frankly writes, "I do not think that the Christian missionary should aim at converting adherents of the so-called 'higher' religions in which, as I believe, God's saving grace is already recognizably at work." 2) This much, then, is clear: Macquarrie does not conceive of Christian mission as the effort "to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations." 3) Yet, this is the basic aim, the heart and essence of the Christian mission, in the apostolic teaching as well as throughout the history of the Christian Church. By whatever name one may call one's 'mission', - without the avowed purpose of causing non-Christians to become Christians one could not call it 'Christian' mission.

When we try to find what is Macquarrie's concept of the mission of the Church, we are hard put to discover even an outline of what he means in the scant three pages which he devotes to the Mission of the Church. We do learn that in his view, the Church's mission is the corollary of the Church's ministry, directing outward what the ministry must do within the Church. He writes that "the abiding motive of mission is love, and we have seen that Christian love is the self-giving that lets-be," 4) and that "the ministry of

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.394

3) Rom.1,5

4) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.393

the Church is its work in helping to let-be the new community of beings." 1) So "the words 'ministry' and 'mission' point to the same phenomenon." 2) "The ministry of the Church is quite simply and adequately described by St. Paul as 'the ministry of reconciliation.'" 3) This 'ministry' becomes identical with the 'mission' of the Church when Macquarrie speaks of the ministry of the laity. "The responsibility for this ministry lies upon the laymen in government, industry, technology and other spheres." 4) The key to the understanding of the nature of both ministry and mission, therefore, is the concept of reconciliation. "By 'reconciliation' is meant the activity whereby the disorders of existence are healed, its imbalances redressed, its alienations bridged over." 5) The ministry of reconciliation then is a "ministry of letting-be, that is to say, of safeguarding and encouraging potentialities for fuller existence and being." 6) So, in practice, it is "the ministry of responding to those in need, and without this, any other kind of ministry is empty." 7) This ministry of

1) loc. cit. p.374

2) loc. cit.

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.458

5) ibid. p.246

6) ibid. p.458

7) ibid. p.376

reconciliation "is given by God to those who themselves have been reconciled to him through Christ." 1) At the same time we find that Prof. Macquarrie, after having eliminated the factor of bringing about 'the obedience of faith', claims that "the time has come for Christianity and the other great world religions to think in terms of sharing a mission to the loveless and unloved masses of humanity, rather than in sending missionaries to convert each other. This would be a global ecumenism...." 2)

We are again in a baffling quandary. The Church's mission is depicted in terms that confine that mission entirely to interhuman relationships. The connection with God can only be made by arguing from being to Being behind terms which do nothing to lift ministry and mission above the physical and sociological level: loving service, self-giving, reconciliation, healing disorders, responding to those in need. Yet, 'it is given by God to those who themselves have been reconciled to him through Christ.' How could, on this basis, the other great world religions possibly come into a common mission with Christianity? Furthermore, how could people who were first of all themselves reconciled to God in Jesus Christ do anything else than make it their explicit aim to bring reconciliation to God to all men through this very same Jesus Christ? And how

1) loc. cit. p.374

2) ibid. pp. 394-395

- in doing so - could they avoid making them Christians? And if the ministry of reconciliation "belongs to the whole Church," 1) - how could they share that ministry and mission except with those who themselves belong to the Church?

Once again we are at the point where it has become impossible to unravel the confusion created by the predilection for one segment of Scripture lifted from its context, - in this case one word, the word 'reconciliation'. Apparently it has been "isolated and commented upon. These comments gradually grow into an autonomous world of ideas" 2) The passage from which it was lifted is, of course, II Cor. 5,18-20. Here we read, that God "through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Clearly, the train of thought of the apostle is: once reconciled to God, we are aware that all mankind is within the saving purpose of God; 3) that their

1) loc. cit. p.374

2) Hendrik Kraemer, RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (London, 1955), p.285

3) To take this line to mean that the reconciliation of the world to God is already a de facto situation, would

reconciliation to God through Christ has been placed in our hands as our ministry; that our ministry is a message; that this message is an appeal; that the appeal is an appeal on behalf of Christ; that its content is: 'be reconciled to God.' The ministry of reconciliation according to II Cor. 5, far from being confined to interhuman relationships, is one in the vertical dimension. It deals with man's relationship with God. In fact, in II Cor. 5 there is no reference to a ministry of reconciliation that deals with man's relationship with man at all. This is not to say that the Scriptures do not teach it on that level also. There is ample admonition to this effect, e.g. in Rom. 12 and 13 and in I Peter 3. The issue is a matter of priorities. As we have seen, John Macquarrie has set aside the first priority within the ministry of reconciliation, which is basic and essential to any reconciling activity than can be received from God as a ministry and mission, namely that those who engage in the ministry of reconciliation be first themselves reconciled to God through Christ! From here on, whatever else may be said about a reconciling mission cannot claim affinity with II Cor. 5 or any other biblical teaching, in spite of quasi-Christian phraseology. With the basic priority removed, it must lose its footing in the Gospel.

militate against the meaning of the entire passage. See also footnote 4 on p. 22.

We cannot but conclude that it is impossible to maintain the identity of Christianity as a religion centred in Christ and at the same time to contend that God's saving grace is recognizably at work in other religions so that there would be no reason to win their adherents over to Christianity. This means that there is no theological or rational ground for the idea that Christianity and other great world religions could possibly share in a common mission. If this 'would be a global ecumenism,' - it would also be impossible!

6. WHAT KINGDOM HAS NO KING?

We have come now to the point where we can establish the relation between the Church, the Kingdom and the world in Macquarrie's theology. Already we have seen that the figure of the King has no place in his concept of the Kingdom of God. Jesus has gone his own way, overcome the potential for idolatry in his own life by 'utterly giving himself' and by his death attained Christhood. "The Church is to be understood as the community in which this raising of manhood to God-manhood, which we see in Christ, continues." 1) "To believe in the cross of Christ.... means to relive the cross in our own experience in the sense of following Christ in his rejection of idolatry and his obedience to the demand of self-giving." 2) "The Church, like the individual Christian and like Christ himself, is called to give itself." 3) Man's relation to God, including his reconciliation, has its pattern in the course and end of Jesus' life. "We saw the consummation of the incarnation at the point when Jesus utterly gave himself in the

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.348

2) ibid. p.291

3) ibid. p.393

death of the cross...." 1) There are not at this point nor in the consummation any dealings of Christ with man. The parousia is absorbed in an all-encompassing unfolding of Being. "To speak of his coming 'in glory' is to point to that feature of the Kingdom of God which means the resolution of the ambiguities of the world and the unmistakable manifestation of the holiness of Being." 2) What is left, is that that consummation is repeatable in each Christian and in the Church. Christ no longer functions as Mediator and Saviour. Macquarrie says, referring to the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, "Lest we be tempted to construct too elaborate a theory of atonement, or to suppose that some particularly complex historical happening was necessary for God to be able to accept man, we should call to mind Christ's own parable of the prodigal son who finds the father willing to receive him, though there is no special machinery to make possible a reconciliation, and still less is there any demand that the son should give his assent to a doctrine of atonement." 3) Finally, as is evident from the idea of Christianity's sharing a common mission with the other great world religions to the loveless and unloved, Jesus Christ is in this theology not even merely another king over the affairs of the human race.

1) loc. cit. p.348

2) ibid. p.330

3) ibid. p.283

Consequently, the Christian has lost the anchor which holds him to the Kingdom of God. No longer can he say, "Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." 1) Instead he is left with the task to work out his "own salvation with fear and trembling." 2) He must live to give himself utterly in death. By repentance and faith he can make that death 'creative'. But it is nothing to him that "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." 3) What counts is that he has a place in the world. "To be 'chosen' or 'called' and also 'justified' by Being is to have the assurance that one counts for something in the world," 4) is the best Macquarrie can do with Rom. 8,30. Hence, the Church is not "the Jerusalem above." 5) Its identity is tentative and destined to merge with that of the world. For Macquarrie says, "The aim of the Church is not to w i n the world, but rather to identify itself with the world, even to lose itself in the

1) Phil.3,20-21

2) Phil.2,12

3) Luke 15,10

4) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.304

5) Gal.4,26

world...." 1)

(We shall have occasion later to study the concept of the 'world' in this and other connections. It may suffice here to say that Macquarrie as well as Rahner use this term, unless they stipulate otherwise, in the sense of the cosmos, the whole creation and the whole of humanity, with a slight emphasis sometimes on the aspect of 'creation', at other times on 'humanity', as is the case in the last quotation.)

The relationship between the Church and the Kingdom is also one of identification in the consummation. But this identification is established in and through the identification of the Church with the world. In the present situation the two are distinct and Macquarrie holds that the Kingdom "is not to be identified with the Church." 2) But in stating that "one cannot draw a hard and fast line between the Church and the 'world'," 3) and that there "is in the world a community of faith that stretches beyond the frontiers of the Church, in the narrow sense," 4) the 'frontiers' of the Church have in effect been extended to encompass all mankind. For, as we saw with Karl Rahner, once the principle of an 'anonymous Christianity' has been

1) John Macquarrie, PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (London, 1966), p.393

2) ibid. p.330

3) ibid. p.347

4) loc. cit.

established, or in Macquarrie's terms, of the revelatory manifestation of Being in all beings, it is not possible to think any more in terms of a distinction between redeemed and unredeemed life.

This means, however, that - in spite of Macquarrie's contention to the contrary - the Church is identified with the Kingdom, here and now. For the world is in the present. The Church is in the present. And "like the other eschatological phenomena, the kingdom of God is already present." 1) "We may think of the kingdom as the entelechy of the Church, the perfect unfolding of the potentialities that are already manifesting themselves in the Church." 2) But then again, "The kingdom is the entelechy of the world as well as of the Church." 3)

At this point both Rahner and Macquarrie have a choice to make. Is the world to absorb the Church or is the Church to encompass the world? Because of the abiding place Rahner has accorded Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world and King of the Kingdom of God, he has chosen the latter possibility. In doing so, he has remained - if not within the factual situation in which there is an actual ultimate acceptance or rejection of the grace of God with men - within the plan of God for the salvation of all mankind.

1) loc. cit. p.330

2) ibid. p.349

3) ibid. p.350

Consequently, even in his leaning toward universalism he has maintained the christocentricity of his theology. In the main, therefore, he is still thinking in terms of the biblical categories. Macquarrie, however, has chosen the other possibility. Because Jesus Christ is eliminated from his concept of the salvation of men in any other sense than of his being a prototype, the Church can only follow him in death, i.e. to her own extinction. This is to take place by the final absorption of the Church by the world. As the Church identifies itself with the world to the point where it loses itself in the world, the Kingdom is ushered in. So Macquarrie moves in the opposite direction from Rahner and has moved outside the realm of biblical categories due to the loss of the christocentricity of his theology. He does say, "The end set before it (the Church) is the kingdom, in which it will lose itself." But he immediately continues to show that the Church only would become the Kingdom by merging into the world. "The aim of the Church is not to w i n the world, but rather to identify itself with the world, even to lose itself in the world, in such a way as to bring nearer the kingdom in which the distinction of Church and world will be lost." 1)

We saw that in the course of his work Macquarrie did make an effort to maintain the identity of the Church as a Christ-centred community, but that this effort was ill

1) loc. cit. p.393

suiting to his basic assumption of the coextensiveness of creation, reconciliation and consummation as well as to his avowed universalism. As with these basic presuppositions his theology must stand or fall, we can only conclude that christocentricity not only is lost from his concept of the Church but, a fortiori, from his concept of the Kingdom of God. There is ultimately nothing specifically Christian about it. The Kingdom of God has been reduced to merely one of the phenomena in the realm of man's religious life.

F. CONCLUSION.

As we conclude this section, we are left with the conviction that the Christian faith is unequivocally and most intimately bound up with the Holy Scriptures. It cannot but be destructive to the faith when one goes behind or beyond the teaching and the categories of the Bible. Although it is a noble effort to try and bring the Gospel with intellectual honesty to terms with the contemporary climate of thought within and outside the Church, - apparently it cannot be done by re-writing the Gospel nor by extending its scope to make it applicable to the modern world which has become all but a neighbourhood. No matter how knowledgeable and sophisticated modern man - the Christian included - may become, no matter how closely interrelated human society may be so as to move toward an ever more integrated world-community, - to be a Christian and to be engaged in the mission of the Church can never circumvent the fact that "we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles." 1) The apostolic injunction remains: "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you." 2) To be entrenched in a narrow biblicism

1) I Cor.1,23

2) I Pet.3,15

is not a defense, but a flight. But to meet the humanism of the modern world by a universalist extension of the Gospel is not a defense either, but a surrender.

The world is in darkness. The Gospel is that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." 1) The Gospel is a gospel of salvation, and that is salvation in the midst of perdition. For "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." 2) "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." 3) And if God then gave his only Son in order that the world should not perish, then that is obviously what the world is doing! But there is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." 4)

1) John 1,5

2) John 1,11

3) John 3,16

4) Rom.8,1

III. THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN TENSION.

A. PROF. EMIL BRUNNER'S EKKLESIA AND THE CONSUMMATION.

It is by no means a foregone conclusion that the New Testament provides us with ready answers regarding the nature of the Church or the Kingdom of God. Neither is it obvious from biblical teaching whether and how they are related to each other. As yet the self-understanding of the Church and its ties with the Kingdom of God seem to be far from clarified. "This problem of the relationship of the Church to the eschatological reign or kingdom is . . . the fundamental problem of ecclesiology, and perhaps of the whole ecumenical dialogue." 1)

An attempt to discuss the problem on a new and different level has been made by Prof. Emil Brunner in the final volume of his DOGMATICS. 2) He takes his point of departure in the concept of the Ekklesia, "as fundamentally different from everything covered by the concept 'Church' . . ." 3) It is essentially a brotherhood, a fellowship, which knows of no institutional boundaries and cannot be subject to any laws. The 'Church of Faith' "is every form

1) From a paper read by Robert Murray at the International Congress on The New Testament Today in Oxford, September, 1965.

2) Emil Brunner, THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, FAITH, AND THE CONSUMMATION, DOGMATICS: VOL. III

3) ibid. p. x

of historical life which has its origin in Jesus Christ and acknowledges in Him its foundation and supreme norm." 1)

"But this is something different from the Church. For what we call Church is not a brotherhood but an institution; not the Body of Christ, but a corporation in the juristic sense of the word." 2) "Jesus Christ wills to have a people - a people, but certainly not an institution." 3) The Ekklesia is 'the new humanity', 'men in fellowship', 'the true brotherhood', 'the true, visible brotherhood of the reconciled', a 'spiritual brotherhood', 'a fellowship in which God alone, God and his love, rules'. 4) Its social form is that of a "world-embracing brotherhood," 5) "ordered simply and solely by the Spirit (pneuma). His gifts of grace (charismata) and His ministries (diakonai)." 6) "The New Testament idea of the Ekklesia on the one side is completely lacking in the institutional element, and on the other is inseparably bound up with the thought of brotherhood....," 7) ".....a brotherhood resulting

1) loc. cit. p.6

2) ibid. p.22

3) loc. cit.

4) see ibid. pp.21/22

5) ibid. p.35

6) ibid. p.45

7) ibid. p.121

from faith in Christ." 1) It is "the Church as known to faith," 2) "a thoroughly uncultic, unsacred, spiritual brotherhood..." 3) "It knows itself as a chosen people of God; in itself, the little flock of Christ's redeemed, it recognizes the vanguard of the Kingdom of God, of the new humanity united with God and in God." 4)

Brunner has some very harsh things to say in regard to the institutional churches, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic. He calls the development of the *Ekklesia* into a Church "a disastrous misdevelopment", and calls "the Church which is the end-product of this development - the Roman Catholic Church...." 5) He sees this development originating from two factors: the sacramental view of salvation and the assertion of formal legal authority. These factors "do not belong to the essence of faith in Christ, and were there in contradiction to the *Ekklesia*, thus without any right to be there." 6) But the other churches or groups of Christians do not appear in a much more favorable light. He claims that "none of the present forms, neither the national Church, nor the Free Church, nor the

1) loc. cit. p.128

2) ibid. p.131

3) ibid. p.33

4) ibid. p.24

5) ibid. p.58

6) ibid. p.60

Brotherhoods can lay claim to be the Ekklesia of primitive Christianity." 1) Their attempt to restore the Ekklesia failed, for "by calling themselves Churches they have assimilated into their nature the character of an institution and have to that extent lost the character of brotherhood in Christ." 2) He sees the basic mistake of both the Roman and non-Roman churches in that "both of them understand the Church as a thing - that is, as an institution, while this never happens in the New Testament." 3) Brunner claims "...that most Protestant theologians are so misled as to believe that the institution of the Church is the necessary form of the Ekklesia, and that the Catholic Church for its part makes the identity of Ekklesia and Church its dogma..." 4)

We feel disinclined to follow Brunner in his views for two reasons, namely that we doubt that his concept of the Ekklesia is that of the apostle Paul in contrast and opposition to the views of the other apostles, and that he is neither explicit nor consistent in his portrayal of the Ekklesia.

Prof. Brunner makes the teachings of Paul the sole basis of his concept of Ekklesia. He believes that he has

1) loc. cit. p.84

2) ibid. p.85

3) ibid. p.20

4) ibid. p.35

to make a choice between the views of Paul and those of the other apostles.

The New Testament knows of no homogeneous doctrine of the Church but only the disagreement between a 'Catholic' doctrine basing itself on the Jewish Christian and post-Pauline sources and a 'Reformed' doctrine which appeals to the genuine Paul. To seek for 'the' New Testament concept of the Church is hopeless and in fact impossible. On this basis there can be nothing but the contradiction between fundamentally irreconcilable New Testament doctrines. 1)

Of Acts 15 he says:

....it is clear that two different concepts of the Church were here in conflict, a theocratic-authoritarian concept and a spiritual one which in principle excluded all legal obligation. the Jewish Christian Apostles had not properly understood his (Paul's) doctrine of Christ and his conception of the Ekklesia; the treaty of peace had not been able to overcome the contradiction completely. 2)

And so the conflict was constantly breaking out afresh, until at last the authoritarian legalistic canonical conception triumphed over the Pauline one. In fact, it even came about that writings expressing this conception were produced under the pseudonym of Paul and accepted into the canon of the New Testament. 3)

Thus Brunner has created a conflict between the teaching of Paul and 'the Jewish Christian Apostles' 4) which runs so deep that their views become irreconcilable, indeed. One must now find oneself either on the side of an authoritarian

1) loc. cit. p.47

2) ibid. p.39

3) ibid. p.40

4) This would have been an astonishing distinction for Paul himself! See Acts 18,18 and ch. 21; Rom.9,3; II Cor.11,22; Phil.3,5.

legalistic concept of the Church or on that of a spiritual one. The choice of words in this regard explains why Brunner puts himself so unequivocally on the side of Paul. Yet, we consider this 'conflict' as one which Brunner himself has injected into the picture which the New Testament gives us of the teaching as well as the development in practice of the earliest Christian community.

On being faced with Brunner's theory, one is immediately reminded of the Pastoral Epistles with their explicit instructions for the organization of the local church. Brunner states that critical scholarship has shown them to be spurious, - "pseudonymous writings of the second century." 1) As we saw above, he therefore goes so far as to claim that they were designed to falsify Paul's position and attach his name to a concept to which he was diametrically opposed. Not only would this hardly be in keeping with the situation and climate of thought of the Church in the second century; it militates against Brunner's own statement regarding the Pauline theology: "The Church which rose out of the Ekklesia as early as the second century had already not only not understood it, but forgotten it." 2) This would be most unlikely, if it was necessary to make a conscious effort at falsification of authorship for the sake of strengthening 'a disastrous misdevelopment'! Nor

1) E. Brunner, op. cit. p.40 fn.

2) ibid. p.46

do we see how Brunner could speak of the "proclamation of the Apostles as a compact unity!" 1) As to the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, the matter appears far from having been settled. The view advanced by Brunner has been held in Germany by the jurist and theologian R. Sohm, in England by E. Hatch. However, Prof. Dr. J. de Zwaan of Leiden shows that this theory is untenable. Without belittling the difficulties which the texts present, De Zwaan states that, although Marcion rejected them (probably for reasons having to do with their c o n t e n t rather than with their authorship), it is possible that the Pastoral Epistles were known to Clement of Rome, before the end of the first century, and certain that Ignatius and Polycarp knew them. They are generally known after 150. 2) In regard to critical scholarship, De Zwaan concludes, "A Greek scholar will, therefore, all things considered, be as little inclined to regard these letters as not written by Paul as his colleague in the science of history, - but the theologian?" 3) He reviews the theological arguments and admits that there is no absolute certainty on this count, but that he himself accepts the weight of the arguments for Pauline authorship. 4)

1) loc. cit. p.5

2) Dr. J. de Zwaan, INLEIDING TOT HET NIEUWE TESTAMENT, VOL. II, (Haarlem, 1948), see pp.163-190

3) ibid. p.184

4) ibid. see pp.184-188

It is evident that the certainty with which Brunner rejects the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline is unwarranted.

In addition, there is one text which seems to overthrow Brunner's theory altogether, namely I Cor. 12,28. Here we find among the functions which Paul has listed as operative within the Church that of 'administrators'. The literal meaning of the Greek word is; 'one who steers or navigates a ship.' Dr. Beyer states in KITTEL'S WOERTERBUCH:

It can only be dealing with the special gifts which enable the Christian to serve his congregation as navigator, as a proper leader of its order and, consequently, of its life. 1)

Perhaps we should find neither a homogeneous doctrine of the Church nor any 'fundamentally irreconcilable New Testament doctrines' in the Bible! Brunner may have tried to proceed from something explicit which is not given any explicit attention in the New Testament. With Prof. Karl Barth we doubt that any New Testament writer intended to lay down a plan for the Christian community, its order, or the lack of it.

The reason why the establishment of the community by Jesus Himself could not emerge as a definite and distinctive event in the Gospel tradition is rather that this is the theme of the whole Gospel narrative as an account of Jesus, the whole of the Gospel narrative as an account of Jesus necessarily being an account of the birth of the Christian community.... 2)

1) Gerhard Kittel, THEOLOGISCHES WOERTERBUCH ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT, Vol. III (Stuttgart, 1938), p.1035

2) Karl Barth, CHURCH DOGMATICS, VOL. IV, Pt. 3, 2nd Half, (Edinburgh, 1962), p.683

....it is quite impossible to keep the two histories apart, to find a Jesus who prior to and apart from the community exists and thus to try to write first a life of Jesus and only then a history of the primitive Church. 1)

Secondly, Brunner is neither explicit nor consistent in his portrayal of the *Ekklesia*. He does say:

But what the social form of the Church would have to be in order to be genuinely apostolic, is a question which could be answered only by keeping in view at the same time the *Ekklesia* of apostolic times, the present, and the eschatological future. 2)

However, he fails to proceed to go any further, except with regard to the relation between the *Ekklesia* and the Kingdom of God with which we intend to deal below. Instead we meet with inconsistencies which make it difficult to understand just what is the issue Brunner is discussing. On one hand we read that "the nature of the Christian brotherhood is basically different from the nature of an institution, which is called the Church, and is indeed incompatible with it." 3) "Faith in Christ gives rise to a fellowship in which men share their life, *Ekklesia*, but not to an institution, a Church." 4) Could one understand this to mean anything but that *Ekklesia* and Church are mutually exclusive? Yet, on the other hand, Brunner calls institutional churches (the Roman Church not excluded) "the

1) loc. cit. p.684

2) Emil Brunner, op. cit. p.121

3) ibid. p.40

4) ibid. p.43

instrument and shell of the Ekklesia". 1) Indeed, he upholds in so many words the indispensability of the institutional Church when he writes:

The institutional form, the Church, does not belong to the e s s e n c e of the Ekklesia. But as we men are constituted this is necessary as its covering, its shell and its instrument. 2)

We are, therefore, not surprised when finally Brunner defeats his own argument against the churches, whose institutional character, as he maintains, prevents the existence of a living faith and allows merely for a faith on the authority of men, i.e. priests, or of a book, i.e. the Bible. For he states:

Catholic theology teaches that faith on authority should be regarded as a step on the way to true faith, just as Reformed theology regards mere faith in the Bible as a prelude to true faith, which rests on Christ Himself. 3)

Surely, Brunner would not suggest that the Roman Church would teach her children that this step the Church teaches them to make is a step o u t of the Church! Surely, he does not ask of the churches of the Reformation that they play the prelude of the faith to their children, but force them to sing the hymn elsewhere!

Twenty years earlier, Prof. Brunner wrote about the nature of the Church in his work on ethics. In it he made, in our opinion, the proper connection between the community

1) loc. cit. p.85 and 89

2) ibid. p.129

3) ibid. p.139

of believers and the Church as institution, the right distinction between what is essential to the nature of the Church and what is 'shell and instrument' in its historical form. He maintained then that in the world in which we live we cannot have one without the other. "...only in that which is historical do we have what is eternal...." 1) "The Church of Christ cannot exist without particular cultic fellowships (Kultgemeinschaften), without separate congregations." 2) Already he makes a distinction between the 'Church of Faith' and the institutional Church and denies their identity, - and rightly so. But he also holds:

It belongs, as we saw, to the nature of the Church of Faith, that it must lead to the forming of a cultic community (Kultgemeinde), in which the tasks which are given to the Church in accordance with its nature by divine command are being executed in the activity of the community as a whole, and that implies, by means of a certain organization. 3)

"The separate congregation must therefore, shape its order as much as possible in accordance with the meaning of the Church of Faith," 4) because "the cultus-community is the only form in which the Church can possibly become visible to the non-believing world." 5)

1) Emil Brunner, DAS GEBOT UND DIE ORDNUNGEN (Zürich, 1939), p.512

2) ibid. p.526

3) ibid. p.539

4) ibid. pp.524-525

5) ibid. p.521

The difficulties with which Brunner had to wrestle later in his "DOGMATICS" are somewhat foreshadowed in that he in his earlier work writes of the 'twofold nature' of the Church, namely both divine and human, but does not at that time pursue this point and fails to define especially the divine factor in the Church's nature. 1)

Prof. Brunner's approach to the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God, however, has remained substantially the same. As we deal with it, we shall - if we may be permitted to do so - take it as understood that we shall apply the term Ekklesia in the way in which he has used the term Church in his "DAS GEBOT UND DIE ORDNUNGEN", so that the two are essentially synonymous.

Brunner's consideration of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom takes its bearings from the Resurrection of Jesus. With Barth (2) he holds that "the Resurrection is the beginning of the Last Things, of the Consummation, limited to Him in His historical manifestation." 3) "He who believes in Him shares with Him in the Resurrection, and is an heir of the eternal world even in this life." 4) Therefore, the life of the Church is

1) loc. cit. see p.547

2) Karl Barth, op. cit. VOL. III,2, see pp.460-461 and 490

3) Emil Brunner, DOGMATICS: VOL. III, p.343, cf. p.395

4) ibid. p.411

'messianic' or 'eschatological', "...life in the presence of God in the midst of the stream of time, God's Kingdom in the midst of the world of sin and death." 1) But there is a difference between the Christian and Christ. "God wills to reveal Himself perfectly in His majesty and His glory and He wills to communicate Himself perfectly in His love. This goal has indeed been reached in Jesus the Christ..." 2) But to the Christian it comes "not yet manifestly, but only in a concealed manner; not yet in the form of glory, but only in the form of a servant on the cross." 3) Therefore, this goal awaits a future consummation. This is the final hope of the Church. "One cannot be a believer without sharing in the final hope." 4) ".... the ~~Ekklesia~~ is only the vanguard of the coming Kingdom of God." 5)

Of the Kingdom of God in itself Brunner does not endeavour to give a description. But he indicates certain characteristics. Quoting Oetinger (1765), "The end of the ways of God is corporeality," 6) he says "that the Consummation will not remove the creaturely character of the creature, the contrast between the Creator and his

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.341

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.17

5) ibid. p.122

6) ibid. p.438

creature." 1) It "will be the perfecting of the presence of the love of God with man and the presence of man with God..." 2) "The Consummation as eternal life is the relationship to God in which we see Him 'face to face'; the Consummation as the Kingdom of God signifies the perfection of the relationships between men." 3) "The humanization of man is the goal of God. T h i s is what the Kingdom of God means. It is one with the Kingdom of perfect humanity." 4) But a detailed description cannot be given. "It belongs to the character of the Final Event that its character as event is unimaginable." 5)

If we understand Brunner rightly, he sees the Kingdom of God established and manifested in Jesus Christ as the Resurrected One. In an inward way, by faith, men share in the resurrection-life and by their communion with Jesus Christ have begun to live within the Kingdom of God. But neither is the Kingdom thereby established in its fulness, nor has any man access to its riches and glory in such a way that it can flood his life with them and transform him to the point where nothing further awaits him. He must wait for the return of Christ, when His glory will fully and

1) loc. cit.

2) ibid. p.439

3) ibid. p.440

4) ibid. p.442

5) ibid. p.397

without limitation stand revealed in all the world, in order to find all areas of his life taken up in the life of the Kingdom of God. In the Church, therefore, the Kingdom is only b e g i n n i n g to become manifest by the Holy Spirit who is the form of the presence of Christ in the Church. And among mankind the Kingdom has only appeared as a vanguard which manifests the hope for the Kingdom of God as the cosmic reign of God. The vanguard is the Church.

We recognize that much of the teachings of the Bible is reflected here and that the Christian hope can be given expression in these terms to a certain extent. In another chapter we shall endeavour to show, however, that in the light of the Scriptures the relation between the Kingdom and the Church can be understood to be at once less intimately individualistic and more radical and lasting.

Yet, Brunner's position would not call for serious criticism, were it not that it is surrounded by certain problems, especially in the question of the meaning of death, of the final Judgment and of the extent of salvation.

Early in his final volume of "DOGMATICS" we come upon the statement that faith from its onset is "acknowledging itself to be the pure gift of God." 1) It would seem to be inevitable that this unequivocal statement can lead to only one of two conclusions, namely either that of double predestination or that of universal salvation. For if the

1) loc. cit. p.11

capacity of believing openness is not given with man's being human, but results each and every time from an act of God which as it were i n j e c t s faith as a gift into his being, then man's salvation, individually, is either a matter of God's sovereign election or rejection, o r all men without exception must ultimately find themselves, manifestly or in a hidden way, so gifted and, therefore, saved.

Prof. Brunner vehemently rejects the idea of double predestination , which makes man's salvation a matter of God's 'eternal decree', a decision made beyond and before man's existence that sets his course inerrantly toward heaven or toward hell. Therefore, we would expect to see him advocate universal salvation in the end. He does.

We find the statement that "Man's being is always being in decision. He is always answering God's call, even when he denies God." 1) This is reminiscent of Rahner's concept of the 'anonymous Christian'. Consequently, the mission of the Church can be conceived of as 'world-oriented' in a near reversal of Col. 1,13, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son..." So Brunner says, "The ~~Ekklesia~~ as c a t h o l i c a is the new humanity which has indeed every human being in view, but at the same time stands in opposition to the 'World'. But the

1) loc. cit. p.13

transcendence of this opposition is its goal, its route of march. The Church must not sever itself from the world but make approach to it, enter into it." 1) Thus, he sees the distinction between the Church and the world dissolved in a unity which 'transcends', i.e. overarches them both. In this light, the statement that the Kingdom of God 'means' the 'humanization of man' and the designation of the *Ekklesia* as the 'new humanity' 2), "the brotherhood in which absolute humanity has begun to come into being..." 3) are clearly aimed at the inclusion of all of the human race in the Kingdom of God. This poses the question of the Last Judgment.

In his desire to adhere to biblical teaching and at the same time to maintain a doctrine of universal salvation, Brunner takes refuge in a dictum which could be proven to be a fallacy by hundreds of examples from his own work, viz. "All 'symmetrical' logically satisfying knowledge of God is fatal"! 4) Has not Prof. Brunner written three volumes of systematic theology? Is there not a constant effort at 'symmetry' in his own use of dialectic? Could one endeavour to write a work on dogmatics at all without making it one's aim to make a substantial number of

1) loc. cit. p.123

2) see ibid. p.363

3) ibid. p.184

4) ibid. p.424

'logically satisfying' statements about God? Yet, on this amazing foundation he builds the contention, "We teach both; the Last Judgment.... and universal salvation." 1) He admits that, understood as doctrines, they present a contradiction incapable of logical solution, but claims that as kerygma they are both true. In fact, "They are true only when taken together..." 2) This side-by-side of Judgment and Salvation postulates salvation even where there is no conscious faith and makes judgment a constant factor within the experience of faith. Therefore, "...faith is the decisive movement from the one to the other which we must repeatedly make by passing through judgment to faith, to the justifying grace of the Cross of Jesus Christ." 3) We must admit that we are at a loss to hear the teaching of the Bible in this line of thinking. And we cannot think of any good reason why one would wish to postulate such contradictory doctrines. For if they, in some way, tend to make the Gospel more palatable to modern man, they might, by the same token, be a further cause for his estrangement from Christ. To tell the proud man of our time, indomitably conscious of his human worth and dignity and of his freedom to choose whether to be the master of his own destiny or not, that in the end, no matter what he does, he must find

1) loc. cit. pp.421-422

2) ibid. p.422

3) loc. cit.

himself in the Kingdom of God, might strike him as the height of patronizing. He might feel as deeply insulted as Karl Rahner might make an orthodox Jew to feel by calling him an anonymous Christian! We would not be surprised if this man were to answer Emil Brunner, "If I want to go to hell, then that's where I shall go, - and no theologian is going to stop me!"

We cannot apologize for his appearance on the scene. For he makes the point that the whole structure of the Gospel would collapse if we were to deny this man his right to go exactly where he says he might wish to go. The factor of decision would then have been eliminated from the Gospel. The way to love God freely and wholly and for himself alone would have been closed to modern man. To say to him, that there is just no place to go but the Kingdom of God, is shutting the door through which he might enter into the freedom for which "Christ has set us free." 1) When the Dutch Reformed minister Domela Nieuwenhuis became a communist and atheist, he said that he never had asked for anybody to die in his place, and never would. We do not think that depth-psychology should make nonsense of his decision in the face of the Crucified Christ. Neither can we imagine that anyone would want to drag this man kicking and screaming into the Kingdom of God, - least of all God!

It would seem that Prof. K. Barth underscores this,

1) Gal.5,1

when he - speaking of the man who rejects the Gospel - says, "For in refusing the Word of truth he refuses his pardon." 1) He notes, "It does not mean nothing to say: 'Well, I'll be damned!' even though it is God's affair whether or when He will take seriously and put into effect this insane desire." 2) "This is something which has to be said. It concerns the mystery of iniquity which cannot be overlooked or explained away, which is supremely real and active in its own fatal manner" 3) And even though Barth is inclined to leave room for the thought of universal salvation, apokatastasis, and says that "there is no good reason why we should not be open to this possibility," and that "we are surely commanded... to hope and pray for it..." 4) - nevertheless he is much more careful than Brunner to proclaim it as a consummation given with the fact of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Instead he writes:

We should be denying or disarming that evil attempt (to change the truth into untruth) and our own participation in it if, in relation to ourselves or others or all men, we were to permit ourselves to postulate a withdrawal of that threat and in this sense to expect or maintain an apokatastasis or universal reconciliation as the goal and end of all things. No such postulate can be made even though

1) Karl Barth, op. cit. VOL. IV, 3, 1st Half, p.463

2) ibid. pp.456-466

3) ibid. p.474

4)

ibid. p.478

we appeal to the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1)

As we have seen previously, God's final judgment, when it is stripped of its radical character, becomes a phase and facet of man's movement toward the Kingdom of God. 2) This must inevitably change the character of death, and rob it of its finality and judgmental aspect. Brunner's teaching is another example of this trend. But as it tries at the same time to maintain biblical categories, especially in regard to the coming of the Kingdom, it must lose clarity and conciseness.

Brunner understands the appearances of the Risen Lord as the beginning of his parousia. "Therefore with Easter Day the New Age has dawned." It "manifests itself not only through the Resurrection of Jesus but just as much through the new life, life in the Holy Spirit, life in the presence of the Risen Lord, and in the fellowship with Him..." 3) But then, "The existence of the Ekklesia, life in the Holy Spirit and in His gifts - these are signs and results of the world of the Resurrection which is already invading the present." "The last change.... will one day happen radically...." "Yet it is already true of the provisional mode of the Resurrection life...." This Resurrection life "consists in a

1) loc. cit. p.477

2) see the view of John Macquarrie, pp. 94-95.

3) Emil Brunner, DOGMATICS, VOL. III, p.410

progressive transformation" which does not exclude "o u r o w n p a r t i c i p a t i o n, but on the contrary includes it." Yet it will "one day happen radically w i t h o u t any co-operation or imitation on our part; s o l e l y through God's act of new creation." ".... the life of the ~~Ekklesia~~ is Resurrection life in its hiddenness, and therefore only a p r e l i m i n a r y stage of the newness of life..." At the same time, "Christians do not live 'between the ages' but w h o l l y in the new aeon," however, "for the time being o n l y in the first stage of this coming world." "... the existence of the believer is i t s e l f Resurrection...." "But this 'being unto life' is o n l y a being-unto, not yet a being-in." It "is i t s e l f Resurrection and yet at the same time o n l y e x p e c t a t i o n of the Resurrection." 1)

One would be hard pressed to unravel these diverse statements which jostle each other on a page and a half, were it not that it is evident that Brunner is trying to create a continuity between situations and events which are in fact separated from each other as decisively as creation and incarnation. For as creation and incarnation are separated by the Fall, the event of sin in the life of man, so the life of faith and the life of sharing the glory of God are separated by the event of the final judgment upon sin in the life of man.

1) loc. cit. pp.411-412; emphases are ours.

Perhaps this is the point at which we must ask whether both Barth and Brunner are not quite mistaken in understanding the Resurrection appearances of Jesus as the beginning of the parousia. Is not the entire eschatological hope of the Church summed up in the statement of Paul that "we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God"? 1) If Mary Magdalene could mistake the Risen Lord for a gardener, - if Cleopas and his friend could fail to see in Him more than the occasional traveller on the road to Emmaus, - if the Eleven could stand in his presence "startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit," and no more, 2) then it is difficult to see how one could understand his appearances as the beginning of his coming in glory, indeed. For, how could that possibly have left some of his followers in doubt? 3) To say that it was only the onset of his coming in glory, that it had of necessity to share in the tension of the 'already' and the 'not yet' of the faith and, therefore, was a side-by-side of the hiddenness of his divinity in his incarnation and of the manifestation of his divinity in his parousia, could conceivably be understood as the injection of dialectic into the contrast between two mutually exclusive theological allegations for the purpose of avoiding the

1) Rom.5,2

2) John 20,15; Luke 24,16; Luke 24,37

3) Mt.28,17

admittance of theological error!

In the course of this study, the signals of a hazardous trend in modern theology have been accumulating, viz. the trend toward a certain dependence on theological subtleties, often in the form of paradoxes, in order to reconcile statements which contradict each other. We wonder whether thereby the intellectual honesty of some theological positions is not strained. Not only the modern non-Christian, but the Christian as well shows by his reactions to the message of the Church that this approach is of little help in the clarification of the Gospel to him; in fact, that it tends to put the Gospel past being a "stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles," 1) by leaving it merely i r r e l e v a n t!

When we are told, "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you," 2) - ought we not to g i v e a c c o u n t? Does that not mean: coming to grips with the real questions which are put to us in a pluralistic society, - questions of life and death, of God and Satan, of salvation and damnation, of truth and fiction, of the Church and the world, of Christ and Buddha and Marx? Does it not mean that we must speak clearly and simply of the Gospel and its meaning for daily life-decisions? Could

1) I Cor.1,23

2) I Pet.3,15

it be that to the man of this age matters which are presented to him as 'mysteries', paradoxes or as a side-by-side of a 'here-already' and a 'not-yet' are an indication that the gospel of Jesus Christ might be neither clear nor simple? If we qualify our speaking of the Christian faith by terms as 'in principle', 'provisionally' and 'eschatological', 'fulfilled but not completed', 'present but not consummated', are we not open to the suspicion that we do not give account and, therefore, are placing the issues beyond the possibility of dealing with them intelligently? Must not the Christian, to whom the Kingdom of God is held out as manifest and fulfilled in Jesus, come to the conclusion that the Church is not truly dealing with his actual life-situation and his historical existence, if he is told at the same time that, nevertheless, the Kingdom is as yet hidden and must await its consummation at the time of the parousia? Can he avoid the impression that the Church gives with one hand what it takes away with the other?

These are questions which the theologian cannot ignore, if his task is to be more than an academic monologue. For we find that the Kingdom of God moves, indeed, beyond the life-history of the Christian as well as the non-Christian if its consummation is placed beyond history itself. It cannot but become irrelevant to the present and, therefore, to the historical existence of man, if it is assumed that the coming of the Kingdom of God is the end of

history. With Barth and Brunner, numerous theologians take that for granted. It seems to have been overlooked that this reduces history itself to a corollary of sin and treats it as if history were essentially the history of the incursion, climax and elimination of sin and its consequences, and n o t the history of created life and its salvation; as if history could only have Satan for its lord, and not God. But if God is the God of history, then the history of the human race under the domination of sin and death is history-become-sick, a pseudo-history, - therefore not at all history in the sense in which none but God can be its Lord, but a nightmarish interlude. If God is the God of history, as the Bible makes abundantly clear, then t h a t history is truly history, over which He rules without conflict and opposition; then the course of creaturely life b e f o r e the Fall and a f t e r the coming of Christ in glory must be regarded as history par excellence. Then the coming of the Lord means the healing and restoration of history and, therefore, of the historical existence of man. 1)

1) Karl Barth has approached this position by his concept of 'pre-history' (Urgeschichte). But he did not conclude that this was the true history of man, given with his creation and, therefore, to be restored in the Kingdom of God. He did not conceive of the coming of Christ in glory as the healing of history. See CHURCH DOGMATICS, VOL. III, 1. Therefore he can still speak of the coming of Christ as "the goal and end of world history." op. cit. VOL. IV, 3, p. 720. Nevertheless, we do find with him the closest approximation of the historical character of life in the Kingdom of God when he writes, "....eternal life in the sense of Holy Scripture is this present life of ours in

Brunner, however, sees in the consummation of the Kingdom of God the transcendence of history, a "transcendence which in Jesus Christ has begun to be imminent in history, but whose fulfillment must burst asunder the limits of history and of this world," 1) and "which brings all things to their end...." 2) Therefore he can speak of the "end of history". 3) Therefore also he can conceive of death as a transition from historical existence to eternal life, as if the two were mutually exclusive. For what, in his view, is in the way of the full realization of our fellowship with God is 'this body of death'.

Therefore we live.... as men indeed reconciled, united with God's will through the love of God in us, but as actually ever and again enemies and rebels against God. This residue is not yet destroyed. We are still in 'the body of death', therefore some part of death is still our lot. This residue is physical, bodily death. 4)

"Thus death becomes the transition to eternal life and the beginning of perfect fellowship with God." 5)

We find that at this point the Church is lost from the

this present world of ours, distinguished from the life of God then as now as created life, but then as a life become n e w, on an earth become n e w, under a heaven become n e w - become new, that is, in its relation to God, its Creator, Saviour and Redeemer." Karl Barth, CREDO, (Zürich, 1946), p.146.

- 1) E. Brunner, DOGMATICS, VOL. III, p.342
- 2) ibid. p.397
- 3) ibid. p.398 and 400
- 4) ibid. pp.387-388
- 5) ibid. p.391

picture. Any meaningful relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God has no place in this concept of the consummation of man's fellowship with God. Salvation has become ultimately an individual experience.

Furthermore, this concept of death has a strangely platonic flavour. It seems to proceed from the assumption that salvation is a matter of the soul only. The work of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the Christian has dropped out of sight. All that remains between man and the Kingdom is a 'residue' exactly in the area where his existence is manifest in history: 'physical, bodily death'. Just as, in Brunner's theology, God's final judgment has lost its radical character, to become a phase in man's movement toward the Kingdom of God, - so has death. It has assumed positive, benevolent features. The 'last enemy' is not death, but the 'body of death', from which we are freed by death to enter the full fellowship with God.

The collision with I Cor. 15,26 and Rom. 6,23 is obvious. In fact, nowhere in the Bible do we find such a role ascribed to death. In the context of biblical teaching, death is no transition at all. It is a last assault on the Christians' communion with God and fellowship with his brothers. It is - far from being assimilated into the plan of his salvation - to be "swallowed up in victory." 1) But that is part of the coming of the Lord.

1) I Cor.15,54

As it is, the Christian cannot claim that he is actually past death, not even spiritually. For there is enough in his life, body and soul, to warrant his eternal destruction. This side of the parousia he can never find the victory over death in himself, be he ever so 'saved'. His assurance in the face of death lies in the fact that he is not his own master. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith." 1) And that includes the ultimate threat the 'world' holds over us, - death. But our faith is our self-abandonment with body and soul into the hand of Him who bought us with a price: we are not our own. 2) So, "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; s o t h e n , w h e t h e r w e l i v e o r w h e t h e r w e d i e , w e a r e t h e L o r d ' s . For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." 3) The Gospel is not that death has become our friend, but that in the midst of death we are in the hand of God. "And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," 4) said Jesus.

Prof. Brunner has failed to take hold of this facet of

1) I John 5,4

2) see I Cor.6,19-20

3) Rom.14,7-9

4) John 10,29

the Gospel. He is, therefore, hard put to reconcile his view of a consummation brought about by death with the announced coming of the Kingdom of God and must ask, "But can this idea be combined with the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God, with the idea of the coming universal event of the consummation of God's sovereignty?" 1)

It can not! Once more the impatience for the consummation has proved to be a dubious guide. There is no justification for the interpretation of statements about death in the New Testament in the sense of: entering the consummated Kingdom. There is no justification for a separation of the concepts of going to heaven and entering the Kingdom of God. There is no basis for the assumption of a separate existence of the soul. There is no good reason for the anticipation (Vorwegnahme) of the resurrection of the dead. There is no evidence for the coincidence of the coming of Christ in his glory with the death of the individual Christian, - as if his coming were i n j e c t e d a thousand times over into the life of the Church!

Hence, Brunner must take recourse to what we have objected to above: he places his contention regarding death a b o v e the possibility of 'giving account', claiming that it "transcends human reason". 2) And "we have no

1) E. Brunner, op. cit. p.391

2) ibid. p.392

obligation to picture it. On the contrary, we must be content that both things are true." 1) Yet, he himself is not content! Therefore, he takes recourse to a piece of philosophical speculation which puts the death and thus the life of the Christian beyond the course of salvation history altogether:

Perhaps events which lie at a distance from each other in time are not separated from the standpoint of eternity, but simultaneous in the eternal Now. 2)

If we cannot follow Brunner on this way of thinking, it is because we would have to leave the Church too far behind us. "And she is our mother"! 3)

1) loc. cit. p.393

2) loc. cit.

3) Gal.4,26

B. PROF. HANS KÜNG - AN ESCHATOLOGY OF TENSION.

A formidable contribution to the discussion on the nature, the task and the hope of the Church has been made by Prof. Hans Küng of Tübingen. An eminent Roman Catholic theologian, he is professor of systematic and ecumenical theology at the University of Tübingen, director of the 'Institut für ökumenische Forschung' and an editor of the journal 'Concilium'.

Prof. Küng has written a complete ecclesiology, 1) in which he leads his readers into a vision of the Church which is vibrant with life. There is no lofty aloofness from the struggle and pain of the many Christians who are searching for their true place in the Church in the midst of the turbulence of the modern world. There is a constant consideration of the position of non-Roman Christians, implicit, if not explicit, in the expression of his views.

1) Hans Küng, DIE KIRCHE, (Freiburg, 1967). As we had no access to the German text during the writing of this thesis, we had to choose between the English (THE CHURCH, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1967) and the Dutch translation (DE KERK, Paul Brand, Hilversum, 1967). Because of certain flaws in the English translation and the affinity between Dutch and German, we chose to depend for our quotations on the Dutch text, from which we have made our own translations into English. Without wishing to detract from the outstanding work of the translators Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden, we feel that in this way we have moved more closely to the precise meaning of what Prof. Küng has written. To facilitate the work of our English speaking colleagues, however, we shall place the page-numbers of the English edition in brackets.

With an honesty that defies the seeming security of an entrenchment in the past for security's sake, he deals with the tensions which are the very climate in which the Church must live today: the tension between the eternal and the transient in the Church, between Christians and Jews, between what is basic and aggiornamento, between the freedom in Christ and the order of the Church, the Church and the world, the presence of Christ and the parousia.

The vividness of Küng's treatment of the Church is in no small measure due to the central and dominating place he accords the Holy Spirit, in and through whom Jesus Christ makes his saving and ruling presence manifest in the Church. His chapters on "The Church as the Creation of the Spirit" and "The Eschatological Community of Salvation" 1) are, therefore, fascinating and inspiring. His plea for the replacement of the axiom: 'Outside the Church no salvation', by: 'Salvation inside the Church,' 2) is only one example of Prof. Küng's positive approach. His emphasis on the understanding of the Petrine primacy as a 'primacy of service' (Dienstprimat) is most felicitous. 3)

The position of Prof. Küng in regard to the relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God belongs to the area of

1) We refer especially to part 3 of this chapter: "In the service of the reign of God", beginning at p.112 (96).

2) op. cit. p.365 (318)

3) ibid. see p.526. The expression "ministerial primacy" does not seem to do justice to what Küng obviously intends to express. See the English text p. (462).

our investigation. In his statement that "the local church does not only b e l o n g to the Church. The local church i s Church," 1) we find the key to his understanding of the unfolding life of the Church. It is a community that believes. "A community which does not believe, is not Church." 2) We meet at this point the conviction that the Church exists and lives essentially in and through its members, not as an institution. On the other hand, the members do not and cannot believe in separation from the community.

They do not derive their faith from themselves. Nor do they receive it directly from God. They have it through the community which, believing, proclaims the Gospel to them and calls them to have a faith of their own. 3)

Hence, in the unfolding life of the Church each one of its members and the believing community as such are gathered around that which is their origin and the essence of their existence.

This origin of the ekklesia, established by God's saving activity in Jesus Christ, is not simply determinative of the first moment of the first phase, but of the entire history of the Church at every moment; determinative of the nature of the Church. . . . it must not sever the connection with it. 4)

Consequently, "the New Testament message as the original

1) loc. cit. p.99 (85)

2) ibid. p.43 (33)

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.23 (14)

testimony is the critical authority to which we must appeal in changing times. It is the critical standard by which the Church of all ages must measure itself." 1) What is of the essence of the Church is God's dealing with the believing community and His presence within it. This is the secret of the Church's life, its vertical dimension, of which the historical shape and form, the horizontal dimension, is the inseparable correlative. The Church not only "i s visible, but as Church of men and for men (it) also m u s t be visible." The Church "is visible not in spite of its true nature, but according to its true nature," 2) with this qualification: "It confesses its faith in what is invisible which is the mystery precisely of what is visible." 3) "That which is decisive in what is open to view, is veiled." 4)

We would have expected to see Prof. Küng push forward from this point and deal in concrete terms with that hidden essence of the Church of which the believer knows and by which he lives, but which escapes the probing of the non-Christian. But he does not. When he returns to it later, he deals with it in terms of the experience of the faith, the r e l a t i o n of the Christian with Christ through

1) loc. cit. p.33 (24)

2) ibid. p.45 (35)

3) ibid. p.46-47 (36)

4) ibid. p.47 (37)

the Holy Spirit, the p r e s e n c e of God in the midst of the ekklesia. But God remains God, the Church the Church. There is a relationship, there is contact, even communion of one with the other. But that in Christ the one is w i t h the other, f o r the other, i n the other; that the father is the family as much as the children are the family; that the cornerstone is the temple as well as are the stones resting upon it; that the head is the body to the same extent and even more so than the members; this we do not find.

What made Hans Küng stop short of this conclusion which might have flown so naturally from his vision and insight?

As far as we have been able to establish, his concept of the Kingdom got in his way. In his anxiety to steer clear of a triumphalist-Augustinian concept of the Church, which would equate the Church with the Kingdom of God, he came to stress the distinction between the Church and the Kingdom to the point where they belong to two different worlds altogether. What remains is a continuity of a c t i o n, not of essence, and the one merely moves toward the other, proclaims the other, awaits the other, until the Church is r e p l a c e d by the Kingdom, e l i m i n a t e d by the Kingdom, instead of e n t e r i n g and f i n d i n g itself in it; always a bride-to-be, never a bride; always betrothed, never to be married; always partaking in the meal of promise, the

Supper of the Lord, never to sit down to the "marriage supper of the Lamb." 1) For K  ng sees the Kingdom of God o n l y in its fully realized form, as the c o s m i c realm of God's rule. He, therefore, conceives of the reign of G o d as quite distinct from the rule of C h r i s t, obviously taking his bearings from I Cor. 15, 24-28. The rule of Christ is preliminary to the reign of God. Therefore, the time of the Church is an i n t e r i m. And once again we meet the idea, that the coming of the Kingdom of God means the transcendence, i.e. the elimination, of the difference between Church and world, which would seem to imply that God's promises made to the Church, when they refer to the coming Kingdom of God, are not made to the Church at all, but in fact are made to the entire cosmos. In this light, one can understand that Prof. K  ng contends that Jesus, "in distinction from the other separate groups of his day, never proceeds from the idea of the remnant." 2) This in spite of Mt. 7,14, Luke 12,32 and Luke 13,24.

We find the above understanding of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom in K  ng's chapter III, 1 and 2, of Part B: "The Coming of the Reign of God". That in these two sections K  ng's thinking ran into interference on the part of the history of dogma and of

1) Rev.19,9

2) Hans K  ng, op. cit. p.85 (72)

contemporary theological developments is evident from the fact, that in the following section, "In the service of the reign of God", he is not so hampered and presents one of the most brilliant and inspiring sections of his book.

We are now ready to undergird some of our understanding of K  ng's position by the following quotations:

This time of the end, between the already-fulfilled and the not-yet-completed, is the preliminary time, the interim of the Church. 1)

No identity exists ('Church = Kingdom of God'), for the reign of God in the sense of the New Testament is the universal, eschatological-definitive basileia.

Instead of the identity, therefore, the fundamental d i f f e r e n c e between Church and reign of God must be emphasized. 2)

Ekklesia is something essentially of the present, which in the future will be eliminated; basileia is something that has entered into the present, indeed, but at the same time belongs decisively to the future.

Ekklesia . . . is decidedly the work of men; basileia . . . is decidedly the work of God. 3)

Not the Church but the consummated reign of God is the goal of creation; the new creation in which the distinction between Church and world is gone. 4)

When once the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Church has been understood as fundamental, the question of the place and work of the Risen Lord in the Christian community arises. If his parousia means the

1) loc. cit. p.102 (87)

2) ibid. p.108 (92)

3) ibid. p.108 (93)

4) ibid. p.109 (93)

coming of the Kingdom of God, how is his presence in the Church to be understood? At this point the distinction between the rule of Christ and the reign of God enters the picture. At the same time, K  ng's arguments lose clarity, because he is not really making a distinction between the rule of Christ and the reign of God, but between the nature of the realm and situation in which they are manifest. These realms are the Kingdom of God and the Church. The Kingdom is "the realm of complete righteousness, of eternal life, of true freedom and cosmic peace, the final reconciliation of mankind with God in love that never ends." 1) But Christ's rule over the Church is the rule over a very different realm.

We are the Church, and we are the Church. And if we are the Church, then the Church is a fellowship of the searching, the drifting and of those that lost their way, of the perplexed, the tortured and the sufferers, of sinners and pilgrims. If we are the Church, then the Church is a sinful pilgrim Church. There can be no question of idealizing it. 2)

Therefore, the rule of Christ is conceived of as a tentative and temporary form of the reign of God. To the extent to which Christ's rule is identical with the reign of God, it stands in need of consummation, which is to occur at the coming of the Kingdom, which also is the coming of Christ in glory, the parousia. "The death and resurrection of Jesus are understood as the decisive eschatological act of

1) loc. cit. p.558 (488)

2) ibid. p.43 (33)

God," so that "He for whom it (the Church) waits as the coming Son of Man, rules now already as the one whom God has glorified." 1)

If this already makes it difficult to see how a 'fundamental difference' between the Church and the Kingdom can be maintained, it becomes impossible when we read that in the rule of Christ "the coming and fulfilled reign of God announces itself. In his rule it is already at work ..." 2) And that "through Christ God himself exercises his reign over Church and world in a hidden but extremely effective way." 3)

Instead, it becomes obvious that Prof. Küng cannot but come to recognize a continuity and even an area of identification between the Church and the Kingdom, namely in the fact that the subjects of the rule of Christ are the subjects of the Kingdom of God. To put it in his own words, "one might call the Church the fellowship of the candidates for the Kingdom of God." 4) It is p e o p l e that are the Church, and it is p e o p l e that are the subjects of the Kingdom, and they are the s a m e people! This remains true, even if not a l l the people that make up the empirical Church, and not these only, are to be among

1) loc. cit. p.94-95 (81)

2) ibid. p.103 (88)

3) ibid. p.104 (89)

4) ibid. p.112 (95-96)

the subjects of the Kingdom of God.

Prof. Küng's concept of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God becomes still more intricate when he argues that the message of Jesus "allows neither an identification nor a dissociation of Church and reign of God." 1) He writes that the Church "moves toward the consummation of the reign of God - God's reign is its goal, its limit and its judgment. The Church is not God's Kingdom, but the Church longs for the Kingdom, expects it, no, wanders towards it as a pilgrim people and proclaims it to the world as a herald." 2) Until then "it is subject to the rule of this Kyrios, subject to the rule of Christ, which - just as the Church itself - remains until the coming consummation of the reign of God." 3) However, the reign of God is "fulfilled, made concrete and personified in Christ." 4) So the Church lives "under the rule of Christ, which at the same time is the beginning of the reign of God in the present." 5) The Church, though it "is not the (future) Kingdom of God, yet is now already subject to the reign of God that has begun." 6) "Thus the

1) loc. cit. p.110 (94)

2) ibid. p.111 (95)

3) loc. cit.

4) ibid. p.113 (96)

5) ibid. p.111 (95)

6) loc. cit.

Church already partakes in a hidden manner in the beginning reign of God." 1) So it remains unclear, whether and how the Kingdom is at all manifest and how it is related to the Church.

Prof. Küng finds himself in agreement with R. Bultmann, O. Cullmann, J. Jeremias, E. Käsemann, W. G. Kümmel, A. Vögtle and R. Schnackenburg with his view that "in the authentic message of Jesus the reign of God is proclaimed as a future as well as present reign." 2) He would also agree with Barth and Brunner that in the resurrection of Jesus the reign of God has irrupted into history and has begun in the rule of Christ.

We have seen above how in Hans Küng's work a number of statements seem to deny and neutralize each other, so that no clear picture of the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God emerges. As in Prof. Brunner's writings, so here also the effort to maintain a side-by-side of the reign of God in a hidden form in our contemporary world and of the reign of God fully manifest in all its glory at the coming of Christ results in the impression that what we have, we do not really have at all, and of that which we cannot have here and now, we yet have something.

It would seem to us that Prof. Küng, although he has first established the concept of the Church as that of a

1) loc. cit. p.112 (95)

2) ibid. p.68 (56)

community of believers, has dealt with the Church in the sense of 'institution' when he considered its relation to the Kingdom of God. He has further not laid the proper connection between the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the distinction between the rule of Christ and the reign of God. Most of all, however, he has in this area lost sight of the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in this oversight he is far from alone! Yet, "the Spirit is the eschatological gift." 1) "the earthly presence of the glorified Lord." 2) Whatever we have of the presence of the Lord, we have in the way of the Spirit. Whatever there is of the reign of God, is manifest in the reign of the Spirit. Whatever there is of the Kingdom of God, is inseparable from the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

The work of the Holy Spirit is the work of sanctification. All that is accessible of the gifts of God, comes to the Christian as the gift of the Spirit. All that is God-ward in the Church, springs from the impulse of the Spirit.

We conclude, therefore, that the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God can and must be seen as given with and determined by the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

This, then, will be the subject of our final chapter.

1) loc. cit. p.190 (164)

2) ibid. p.193 (166)

IV. THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM AND THE KING.

A. SOME BASIC DEFINITIONS.

It would seem that the problem of the relation of the Church and the Kingdom hinges on the right definitions of biblical concepts. For our subject we are concerned with mainly four: those of the Kingdom of God (or: of heaven), the world, salvation, and the Church.

The Kingdom of God.

There seems to be too little awareness among theologians of the fact that in the record of the teaching of John the Baptist as well as Jesus we find no evidence that they did at any time elaborate on the nature of the Kingdom of God. After John was arrested, Jesus continued John's preaching in the same words, 1) but he did not teach explicitly just what he understood the Kingdom of God to be. There can be only one reason for this: in his preaching he proceeded from a concept or concepts with which his hearers were quite familiar. Prof. Küng writes that "this concept was never defined by Jesus, but presupposed as a well known one, and interpreted (by him)

1) Mk. 1,14; Mt. 3,2 cf. 4,17

in his own way." 1) Would it not be of vital importance for us, therefore, to have a knowledge of what his hearers understood the Kingdom of God to be? Although Jesus often dealt with people who had little formal education in the modern sense, his hearers were remarkably well trained in the knowledge of Israel's religion, even in Galilee.

L. E. Elliott-Binns comments on the judaization of Galilee under John Hyrcanus, a century and a half before Jesus' teaching there. The process "was no doubt carried out by the establishment of schools and synagogues, probably under Pharisaic control, and seems to have been highly successful." 2) Archbishop Philip Carrington stresses the importance of the oral tradition in Judaism, which "was a rigidly organized system of transmitting knowledge . . ." 3) Wherever there was a synagogue, there was a school, which continued the teachings begun in earliest childhood in the Jewish home. 4) As Alfred Edersheim as well as Schrage in Kittel's WOERTERBUCH point out, children throughout the Jewish community attended these schools from age 5 or 6. Till they were ten, they were taught the Holy Scriptures;

1) Hans Küng, op. cit. p.57 (48)

2) L. E. Elliott-Binns, GALILEAN CHRISTIANITY (London, 1956), p.19

3) Philip Carrington, THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Cambridge, 1957), p.243

4) cf. II Tim. 3,15, where the word brephos: infant, baby, is quite in keeping with the eagerness of Jewish parents to let their children share in the recitation of the shema and the prayers at the earliest possible time.

in addition they were taught the Mishnah till they were fifteen. The significance of the synagogue as a teaching institution is attested by the fact that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem there was even a synagogue on the very mountain where the temple stood. 1) The religious training and knowledge of their traditions given to the Jewish people made it possible for John to forego any elaboration on the idea of the Kingdom of God, and for Jesus to proceed to reinterpret it in his own way.

The exhaustive study in Kittel's WOERTERBUCH reveals that the understanding of God's Kingdom in Jesus' days had developed into two main concepts which existed side by side. 2)

The one had a strong this-worldly colouring with social and political overtones. It depended heavily on the expectation of a golden, paradisaic age and looked forward to the reign of God's messianic King in an everlasting Kingdom of 'the saints of the Most High'. 3) It was a blend of messianic expectations and apocalyptic teaching, emphasizing the hope for the elevation of the

1) see Alfred Edersheim, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JESUS THE MESSIAH (Grand Rapids, Mich. 1947), pp.229-233, and Schrage, synagoge. C II 6. Gerhard Kittel. THEOLOGISCHES WOERTERBUCH ZUM NEUEN TESTAMENT, Band VII, pp.820-826 (cf. THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, transl. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.)).

2) see Karl Ludwig Schmidt, basileus, etc., Th.Wb.N.T., Band I, pp.562-595.

3) Dan. 7,18

nation of Israel, including the twelve tribes, as the center of the worldwide dominion of peace and glory of the Messiah King.

The second view was more sophisticated and spiritual. It stressed the essentially personal and inner subjection of man to the rule of God. This concept based itself on the reign of God as the eternal King of heaven and earth, "for which or against which man in a free decision of his will must decide." 1) It derived its character from the teaching of Israel's prophets and ultimately looked for the unveiling and consummation of the Kingship of God over the world. In this view, too, it is vital to be part of the chosen people and God in many prayers is addressed as the 'King of Israel'; yet the emphasis is on the individual and not, as in the other view, on the community or nation. But this view is no less eschatological, in that the revelation and manifestation of God's kingship is constantly stressed as the decisive point at which man's freedom of decision is at an end. The kingship of God "is therefore evidently in the theology of later Judaism a purely eschatological concept in the strict sense of the word." 2)

Ultimately the difference is the following: the idea of the Messiah in later Judaism always expressed a final hope which knew God primarily as the King of I s r a e l and, therefore, saw the goal of God's plan of salvation in the ultimate founding of the n a t i o n a l kingdom of Israel with the Messiah

1) K. L. Schmidt, Th.Wb.N.T., Band I, p.571

2) ibid. p.572

as its King, a king to whom all the other nations then will be subject. On the other hand, in 'the Kingdom of Heaven' the purely religious concept of the eschaton finds expression in its ultimate meaning (God all in all), so that there remains no room for the special emphasis on its ties with Israel as a n a t i o n. 1)

Into the tension between these two strains of eschatology the Son of God sets his "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." 2) In his person he drew the two strains together in perfect harmony. Against this background the 'I am' sayings stand out as shining lights. His use of the term 'Son of Man' for himself (and in this setting he m u s t have used it!) 3), in speaking of h i s kingdom and identifying his Kingdom with the Kingdom of the Father in a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven,

1) loc. cit. p.573

2) John 14,6

3) This in spite of a growing consensus that Jesus never used the term 'Son of Man' for himself; so: R. Bultmann, H. E. Todt, H. W. Teeple, A. J. B. Higgins, A. H. Fuller, Edw. Schweizer maintains that Jesus d i d use the term so. Morna D. Hooker (THE SON OF MAN IN MARK, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1967) also tends to agree that he applied this term to himself. For a review of the discussion of this question, see I. H. Marshall, "The Synoptic Son of Man Sayings in Recent Discussion", NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES, Vol. XII, 1965-1966, pp. 327-351. Marshall concludes that Jesus d i d use the term 'Son of Man', referring to himself. It appears to us that in the setting of the two main concepts of the eschatological hope in later Judaism it would have been as difficult for Jesus to avoid this use of the term as it was natural that he should use it so. O. Cullmann states (THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, London, 1963), that "he openly and purposefully replaced that designation ('Messiah') with 'Son of Man'. . . . he establishes a direct contact with a particular view current in certain circles among his people." (p. 137-138) "By means of this title Jesus thus ascribed to himself the highest imaginable role in the eschatological drama." (p. 156)

is not only religious genius, - it is revelation. Quite in keeping with his teaching, his apostles can speak of the Kingdom of Christ and God. 1)

So, God and Christ are seen side by side, and it is God as well as Christ who may be mentioned first. This serves precisely to confirm that we are not permitted to speak of the basileia of Christ apart from that of God. 2)

The text I Cor. 15,28 should, therefore, not be understood as an indication of the subjugation of Christ to the Father, or of a distinction between the kingship of the one and that of the other, but as the promise that all veils will finally be lifted and that the identity of the rule of Christ with the reign of God will come to its complete unfolding and manifestation. 3)

In perfect keeping with this confluence of the two strains of Israel's eschatology in the person of Jesus is his silent bypassing of many apocalyptic speculations of his day and the gradual widening of the scope of his message from confinement to the people of Israel to the Great Commission of Mt. 28,19. Here also is the

1) Eph.5,5; Rev.11,15

2) K. L. Schmidt, Th.Wb.N.T., Band I, p.582

3) Vincent Taylor warns: "Too much must not be made of the word 'subjected', as if it implied the idea of a demi-god greater indeed than man, but less than God . . ." (THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING, London, 1963, p. 58). In the same connection, Oscar Cullmann says, "It is only meaningful to speak of the Son in view of God's revelatory action, not in view of his being. But precisely for this reason, Father and Son are really one in this activity." (THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, London, 1963, p. 293).

clarification of the transfer of the concept of the chosen people from the nation of Israel to the "Israel of God"; 1) the spiritualization of the covenant in Rom. 2,29: "He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal." Here is the onset of the Church's self-understanding as expressed by Peter: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people..." 2) At the same time, against the background of the merger of these two strains, it becomes clear that the call to personal decision vis-à-vis Christ is not based on an already present universal reign of God, nor on a basileia of Jesus, but on the understanding of the p r e s e n t world-order as penetrable by the kingship of Christ o n l y in and through the self-abandonment to his rule by the individual and the communal life of all who have so committed themselves to him. Apart from the Christian community, therefore, the kingship of God is not effective in the world and does not penetrate into the life and affairs of mankind in general, be it reconciling, healing or judging. Instead, where this is seemingly so, we have to do with the influence of Christian witness on society, a sharing of the fruits of life in the Spirit of Christians with the secular community of which they are part and with

1) Gal.6,16

2) I Pet.2,9

which the i n s t i t u t i o n a l life of the Church is interwoven, a kind of overflow of the effects of the rule of Christ in the lives of his own. For the Church is the bridgehead of the reign of God in this world, its foothold, its banner planted on a hostile shore.

Furthermore, even in the lives of those who are counted among the 'Israel of God', the kingship of God is unfolding against much resistance, is hampered by much lack of receptivity and held back from uncommitted areas of life, because the reign of God can only be complete in the life of the i n d i v i d u a l when it is consummated in the final complete unfolding of the Kingdom of God as a c o s m i c reign of God, i.e. when the parousia, the resurrection and the new creation will burst forth together and at last "the whole earth is full of his glory." 1) In this connection Karl Barth's description of life in the Kingdom of God is apt: it is a "life in peace with God without conflict and in unbroken glorification of God." 2) It is "to serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence and blessedness." 3) If this is the life in the Kingdom of God (as we believe it is), then the Kingdom of God has n o t come, not partially, not tentatively, not provisionally, not at all! For there is neither an

1) Is.6,3

2) Karl Barth, CREDO, (Zürich, 1946), p.147

3) Karl Barth, CHURCH DOGMATICS, Vol. IV, 3, (Edinburgh, 1962), p.903

individual nor a community of which this is as yet true. Then the Kingdom of God is a phenomenon of the future and wholly eschatological. Then the Church prays, 'Thy Kingdom come,' and m e a n s it.

We have proceeded from the understanding of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' days, which implies a reign of God which is u n c o n t e s t e d , u n i v e r s a l and w i t h o u t l i m i t a t i o n s .

We have also distinguished between the k i n g - s h i p and the k i n g d o m of God. In the New Testament, both can be the proper translation for basileia, so that the context must decide which is applicable. The difference lies in the fact that kingship refers to the king only, to his status, his privileges, his prerogatives, his power. Kingdom, on the other hand, is more comprehensive. It includes in its scope both the king and his subjects, refers to their lasting and definite relation and the setting, i.e. the realm, within which this relation is operative. Only in o n e man in all of history has God reigned uncontested and without limitation, the man Jesus Christ. But he is the King! It is therefore confusing to say that thereby more than the King, viz. the K i n g d o m has appeared or to equate h i m and the Kingdom by saying that the Kingdom has become manifest in him. It is even more confusing to state that his resurrection is the beginning of the consummation of the Kingdom of God. And because the parousia and the

consummation are coincident, it is consequently quite doubtful that the resurrection could be understood as the beginning of the parousia. These statements could only be made if one were to proceed from the assumption that in the person of Jesus it was God - and not Jesus! - who reigned as King. By such a strong distinction the human aspect of Jesus' person is isolated to the point where a wedge is being driven into the trinitarian understanding of God's self-revelation: no longer can this Jesus be 'my Lord and my God'!

It is the King who came, not the Kingdom. His status, his privileges, his prerogatives, his power stood revealed. 1) And they flashed forth, only to withdraw. They were never established among men with any degree of permanency. They touched men; they transformed men; they welded them into a community. His power touched the lame, and they walked. It shone on blind eyes, and they saw. It enveloped a burdened woman, and she worshipped in tears. It reached into the grave of Lazarus, and he rose. It drew the eyes of Thomas, and he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" 2) But the marks he left, were not the Kingdom. The healing he brought did not erase death. The community he established does not live under the uncontested reign of God. For we are still contending "against the

1) Lk.23,42; Mt.11,27; Mk.2,10; Mt.8,27

2) John 20,28

principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." 1)

Jesus maintained the rabbinic emphasis on the need for the individual's decision to be subject to the kingship of God. Of that decision he spoke under the metaphor "entering the Kingdom." 2) But he never told anyone that he was now within the Kingdom or that the Kingdom had been established. The metaphor remained a metaphor. In this connection the passage of Lk. 17,20-24 is significant. The Pharisees put a question to Jesus of which they hoped that it would place him entirely on the side of the messianic-apocalyptic eschatology. Their hostility toward him was already out in the open. 3) Perhaps they wanted to humiliate him by the contrast of a messianic golden age with their much subtler theology of the individual's subjection to the reign of God. Perhaps also they already looked for the possibility of pinning the Messiah-claim on him, for which more than one Jew had been executed and which did finally become the lever they used to obtain his conviction. Possibly they wanted to do both. So they challenged him to indulge in the apocalyptic speculation,

1) Eph.6,12

2) Mt.7,13; 23,13 of. Lk. 11,52:

3) Lk.16,14

"when the kingdom of God was coming." 1) He, however, answered them in terms of their own teaching, turning the challenge against themselves 2) : " . . . behold, the kingdom (basileia, i.e. kingship) of God is within you." 3) The touch of irony is unmistakable. One can almost hear the implied: " . . . or is it?" This becomes even more evident from the immediately following verses which show Jesus as teaching the disciples that he equally shared the expectation of the coming of the Kingdom of God as a glorious universal event.

We find, then, in this passage the explicit affirmation of the confluence of both the prophetic and the messianic-apocalyptic strain of Israel's eschatology in

1) Lk.17,20

2) Jesus used this approach not infrequently; see John 3,2-3; Mk.11,28-29; Mt.23,17 and 19; Mt.23,31; in the last text the argument for Israel's favoured position with God on the basis of their ancestry is turned against the Pharisees.

3) Instead of "in the midst of you" (R.S.V.) The simplest and best attested meaning of 'entos' is 'within'. Colin H. Roberts holds that 'entos humon' could not mean simply 'among you'. He hears in Jesus' words an offer of the Kingdom's becoming a "present reality, but only if you wish it to be so." (see Colin H. Roberts, The Kingdom of Heaven (Lk. XVII,21), HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, Vol. XLI, Jan. 1948, No. 1, pp. 1 - 8)

Jacques Winandy ("Le logion de l'ignorance", REVUE BIBLIQUE, Vol. LXXV, 1968, p.74, fn 35) agrees with Roberts that the meaning could not be "parmi vous". However, in regard to the conclusion of Roberts he says, " . . . on ne voit pas bien ce qu'il viendrait faire dans ce contexte tout entier destiné à souligner le caractère totalement imprévisible de la venue du Royaume." Feeling his way to the irony in Jesus' retort, he asks, "Cette petite phrase ne serait-elle pas plutôt une forme renforcée des faux bruits, qui viennent d'être dénoncés?"

Jesus' teaching. For in his teaching of the disciples he is emphatic about the future universal breaking in of the Kingdom of God at his parousia, whilst in his answer to the Pharisees he speaks in the context of the kingship of God in the life of the individual which, as we have seen, is essentially of an equally eschatological nature. 1)

It is the King who came, not the Kingdom. But Pilate, even when he put it into words, did not know what he was saying. 2) A Canaanite woman, a blind man, a dying criminal, - those were the people on whom the kingliness of Jesus dawned. 3)

It is the King who came, not the Kingdom. In fact, the New Testament shows that he expected and longed for the coming of the Kingdom as eagerly as any of his

1) Only once we read that "the kingdom of God has come," but with the significant addition, "upon you." (Mt. 12,28; par. Lk. 11,20) Once again, it is the Pharisees with whom Jesus is in dispute. They are the more refined thinkers who adhere to the personal-subjective concept of the Kingdom of God and to whom the popular hope of the messianic kingdom appears unspiritual and coarse. To them the basileia (malkuth) could not indicate the r e a l m of God's reign. "For the expression does merely describe the fact of God's being King and, therefore, signifies a l w a y s the kingliness, the kingship of God." (K. L. Schmidt, Th.Wb.N.T., Band I, p. 570) So, the term 'the kingdom of God has come upon you,' should read: 'kingship' and means: God's kingship has touched you with its power, has shown you its power in that it overpowers the "strong man's house." (vs. 29) In the reference to the Holy Spirit lies a connection with Joel 2 and, therefore, the eschatological factor in Jesus' reaction to the Pharisees. Again he is using their own terms.

2) John 19,14

3) Mt.15,22; Mk.10,47; Lk.23,42

followers. 1) But that his kingship was to be first a kingship of the heart and after that a cosmic reign, they did not understand. 2) That it would be manifest in the gentleness of sanctification before it would burst forth in glory, they could not foresee. 3) Only after Pentecost did they realize that "the Lord is the Spirit," 4) unobtrusive, tenderly prompting, comforting, guiding his own toward fuller self-abandonment to his rule. Only then did they realize that it was they, the Christians, and their community, the Church, by which the world would know: there is a King; therefore, there is a Kingdom. And then at last did they think of Jesus Christ as the hope of the world and so proclaimed him. 5)

The Kingdom of God, then, is wholly future. But quietly yet persistently the King is with his people in the way of the Spirit. There is a foothold for the coming Kingdom on the earth: it is the presence of the King. He is our bond with "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," 6) and he is our bond with each other. 7) It is all we need to be assured of "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken." 8)

For to his people the kingdom means: the king!

1) Mk.13,30; 9,1

2) Lk.24,21

3) Acts 1,6

4) II Cor.3,17

5) I John 2,2

6) Heb.12,22

7) Eph.2,21

8) Heb.12,28

But to the king the kingdom means: his people, and that is our faith; upon that we fasten our hope; to this we direct our love. For all that is present of the Kingdom of God is so only in the presence of Jesus Christ, i.e. in the Holy Spirit. We cannot designate as the Kingdom of God anything we are, anything we have, anything we do or suffer or conquer. We are, indeed, "delivered . . . from the dominion (exousia, i.e. overlordship) of darkness and transferred . . . to the kingdom (basileia, i.e. kingship) of his beloved Son." 1) But we cannot put our finger on that kingship. The life lived under his Lordship is our true life, but our "life is hid with Christ in God." It is not as if the Kingdom of God was established in Jesus and now has spread to us. But we are told: "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." 2) In other words, of the two-fold expectation upon which Jesus built his preaching of the Kingdom of God, the cosmic reign of God lies beyond the parousia. The aspect of his inner rule in the hearts of man and of the gathering of a 'nation' that is to live as the people of the Kingdom reaches into this world in the manifestation of the presence of the King in the Holy Spirit. This aspect, therefore, has come within the scope of the experience of faith

1) Col.1,13

2) Col.3,3-4

TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH THAT EXPERIENCE
IS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

This experience creates the nation which 'belongs' to the Kingdom, but because it is the experience of f a i t h, the conviction of such belonging and the assurance of the coming of the Kingdom of God are themselves confined to the experience of faith. For "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." 1) The 'Israel of God' is neither at home in this world, nor has it as yet entered the Kingdom of God. It is a nation of "strangers and exiles on the earth," 2) people who have become "aliens" 3) on the very spot where they were born and bred, by their self-abandonment to the lordship of Jesus.

Their belonging to the Kingdom of God is not therefore intangible. But it is not demonstrable either. It is not unreal. But it is not physical either. It is not given in what h a p p e n s to us. It is given in his b e i n g with us. Not anything that is ours, not anything we are, we have, we do, we receive, we enjoy, we suffer, but Jesus Christ is our bond with the Kingdom of God.

For the time being, then, - i.e. until the parousia -

1) Heb.11,1

2) Heb.11,13

3) I Pet.2,11

the Christian cannot say: I have entered the Kingdom of God. But he c a n say: I am in the hand of my King!

Neither can the Church say: the Kingdom has been established in me. But she c a n say: I am the Bride of the King!

So we come to the following definition:

The Kingdom of God is the reign of God, uncontested, universal, over a people that serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness in unceasing glorification of God.

The World.

There is a close connection between the Church's relation to the Kingdom of God and its relation to the world. In fact, the Church's understanding of its proper relation to the Kingdom will determine the character of its relation to contemporary human society. On the other hand, there are factors in today's world which have been of great influence on the consideration of the relation between Church and Kingdom, e.g., the increasing secularism, an atheism imposed on millions, an upsurge of so-called higher religions, a trend towards a pluralistic society, etc.

Because of the interaction of the relationship of the Church with the Kingdom and that of the Church with the contemporary world, there is a need to establish the meaning of the term 'world' as it is used in the New Testament and should be used in the context of this study. A brief review of the expressions which in the R.S.V. have been rendered by 'world' may help to clarify its meaning.

There is first the term paliggenesia, which in Mt. 19,28 means the renewed creation after the parousia, and in Tit. 3,5 includes in this same concept the inner renewal by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The word oikumene is used in Mt., Lk. and Acts, Heb. and Rev. It is the word for the whole of the inhabited

earth.

In aion (eon) we meet an expression which originally and basically denotes a concept of time: the time of God, i.e. eternity 1), or (in the New Testament more frequently) the time allotted to God's creation until the paliggenesia as the renewal in perfect God-wardness of heaven and earth. 2) In the latter sense it is close to meaning 'the era of man's estrangement from God', hence 'the disoriented order' itself under which unredeemed men must live, in contrast to the era and order of the Kingdom of God. 3) Consequently, the word aion can become identical with mankind in its sinful rebellion against God. 4) In the last case, the notion of the evil order under which men live and its dominating power is always included. 5)

The Pauline expression 'flesh' (sark) comes so close to this concept, that in one case it has been translated by 'world' and 'worldly'. 6)

The Greek word most frequently used where the R.S.V. has 'world' is kosmos. It occurs in all but a few small books of the New Testament, by far most frequently in the

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- 1) I Tim.1,17 of. Ps.90,2
 - 2) Mt.13,39 ff; 24,3; I Cor.10,11
 - 3) I Cor.1,20; 3,18; Gal.1,4
 - 4) I Cor.3,19; Eph.2,2
 - 5) Eph.2,2; II Tim.4,10
 - 6) II Cor.10,3

gospel and first epistle of John. It sometimes means: creation. It can then be a synonym of ta panta: all things. 1) In these cases its meaning is close to and sometimes identical with oikumene. This use in the sense of: the whole inhabited world, all mankind, human society in general, the human race, the world and its affairs, everybody, people everywhere, is natural and frequent. There is no specific religious connotation in the term. It is much the same as the word 'world' as it is generally used in English. 2)

In the gospel of John there is a significant turn of events in the twelfth chapter, occasioned by the appearance of some 'Greeks' who wished to see Jesus. At this time Jesus sensed that a decisive point in his ministry had come. He said, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." 3) From this point on the gospel shows a sharp increase in the hostility of the Jews, so that Jesus "hid himself from them." 4) And John complains, "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him." 5) After a last poignant appeal of Jesus ("Jesus cried out . . .") we are led by John to the Upper

1) I Cor.8,6

2) Mt.4,8; 13,38; Mk.8,36; Lk.12,30; John 9,5 etc.

3) vs. 23

4) vs. 36

5) vs. 37

Room, where Jesus' teaching to his disciples is set in that great sequence which ends in the Highpriestly Prayer.

It is most significant that the word kosmos, occurring in John 1 - 11 more than 20 times, can be understood in all but two of these cases in the above general sense. From chapter 12,31 on, however, the word kosmos receives a quite different connotation. It becomes a synonym of the word aion as Paul used it often. It stands for the world in its unbelief, in its sin, in its rebellion against God, in its rejection of Jesus Christ. It stands for human society and its disoriented order. Included in this term 'world' is the power that holds sway over this order and enslaves mankind. Throughout the second half of the gospel of John and his first epistle the word is used in this sense almost constantly. But previous to the work of John, the apostle Paul had already made frequent use of the word kosmos in the same sense. 1)

The study of the pertinent texts reveals that we have a concept of the world in the New Testament that might be called 'sociological' (which we shall henceforth write

1) We lift a few examples from the wealth of material: John 15,18-19; 16,8; vs. 11; 17,14-16; I John 2,15-17; Rom. 3,19; 11,15; I Cor. 7,31; II Cor. 5,19; Eph. 6,12; Col. 2,20; see also Jas. 4,4; I Pet. 2,20, etc. Raymond E. Brown, S.S. has noted the significant change of meaning of the word 'kosmos' and writes that "particularly in the second half of the Gospel, 'the world' is rather consistently identified with those who have turned against Jesus under the leadership of Satan, and a strong note of hostility accompanies the use of 'the world'." (THE ANCHOR BIBLE, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN (1-xii), (Garden City, N.Y., 1966) p. 509

'world'), and another concept which might be called 'religious' (which we shall henceforth write 'World'). The first indicates all of human society with its order and organization, from the United Nations down to the smallest family-unit; its politics, its culture and its infinitely varied economic and social life. The second relates this 'world' to God, and so it becomes World: the whole of human society in rebellion against God, perishing in its sin, driven by demonic powers to self-destruction and filled with unrelenting hostility toward all who have received the grace of God in Jesus Christ and, therefore, toward the Christian community, the Church.

It follows, that Christians as individuals live in the world. Their life is interwoven with that of the world. They share in its order. They live under its laws. They are involved in its progress and its tragedies. They have the ties to race, nation, culture, social grouping, work and play which are common to all men. But at every turn, in that world they meet the World. Because their life-pattern is interwoven with that of society, the World lays claim to their loyalties, their talents, their sacrifices, their very life. At that point they discover that they are in a world which is in essence and through and through, World. They find themselves to be "strangers and exiles on the earth, . . . seeking a homeland. They desire a

better country, that is, a heavenly one." 1) They find that their loyalty to Jesus Christ allows for no other lordship. They discover that in all the world there is only one place, i.e. one order, one community, one shelter, which is not World; the Church of Christ.

Therefore, the Christian lives in the world in constant alert; in perpetual opposition to that which is World in the world. And wherever the world becomes conscious of its essential character, namely that of being World, or wherever the World becomes the passion, the driving force, the dominant factor in the world, there the Christian bears the cross of contempt, ostracism, indifference and finally of persecution.

Between the Christian and the world remains the bond of common humanity.

Between the Christian and the World stands the cross of Jesus Christ.

This leads to a twofold definition:

The world is all of mankind and comprises the order and the institutions of human society. To the world belong the Christians. To the world belongs the Church to the extent to which it has established itself as one institution among many.

The World is all of mankind in its rebellion against God and comprises all that in its order or institutional

1) Heb.11,13-16

aspects tends to perpetuate and deepen the chasm of hostility between man and God. From the World the Christians have been freed and redeemed. From the World has been separated the communal life of the Christians, at the core of which is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation.

The most comprehensive word for that which the love of God has accomplished for man in Jesus Christ is: salvation. This word (soteria) and the verbs connected with it occur often in most of the books of the New Testament. Their current use is not always in keeping with their meaning and significance in the Bible. Salvation means a number of things to a number of modern people. Often the use of the term is ill defined and misunderstood. Christian sensitivity has always detected this. The blunt question, "Are you saved?" has, therefore, met with hesitation on the part of thinking Christians, and rightly so. It is never put this way to anyone in the Bible.

A study of the text shows a varied use of this group of words in the New Testament. The religious (theological) use, however, shows a definite pattern.

The word 'salvation' or 'to save', then, is first of all used in a non-religious sense in the sense of being saved from acute danger of life and limb. 1)

The term is further used in connection with healing. 2) Here already we find a deeper meaning when Jesus says,

1) Mt.8,25; Acts 27,20 etc.

2) Mk.5,23; Lk.8,36

"Your faith has made you well (saved you)." 1) This becomes quite clear when in Lk. 7,50 this expression is used although no act of healing is involved.

'Salvation' has in a much larger number of cases a fully theological meaning. It is then used mainly in two ways: as an expression comprehensive of that which God has given and accomplished in the life of Christians here and now, together with all that God has prepared for them in the future and, secondly, in the latter sense only, i.e. in an eschatological sense.

Only in Acts we find it always as a comprehensive expression, so that a specific meaning is never pinpointed. 2)

Its use in John's gospel is negligible.

In the synoptics we find both the comprehensive and the eschatological use. An example of the first is Lk. 19, 9-10. The second meaning we find in Mk. 13,13 and 10,26 (see vs. 24!) A similar use is found in Lk. 13,23 (see vs. 29). Foerster summarizes:

Soteria in the synoptics is, therefore, on one hand a future event and indicates the entrance into the (future) Kingdom of God, yet it is at the same time in the saying of the lost that are found a thing in the present. 3)

In I Pet and Heb the meaning of salvation is constantly eschatological and, therefore, coincident with

1) Mk 5,34; 10,52

2) Acts 4,12; 11,14; 16,30-31

3) Foerster, soizo, etc., Th.Wb.N.T., Band VII, p.992

the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Paul's writings show both meanings for this concept. Here the twofold use is most clear, as is to be expected, It also becomes quite clear that in the comprehensive use of the term the eschatological meaning is a l w a y s implied; that, on the other hand, salvation may indicate also a purely eschatological concept. Paul uses the expression exclusively in the theological sense. Examples of the comprehensive use are: Phil 2,12; II Thess 2,10 and 13; II Cor 7,10 and the chapters Rom 9 - 11. Examples of the eschatological use are: I Cor 5,5; Rom 5,9-11 (where salvation as a future event is set over against the 'now' of justification and reconciliation); I Cor 3,15; Rom 13,11; Phil 1,28; I Thess 5,8-9. By the emphatic "now is the day of salvation," 1) Paul does not mean to indicate that salvation is to be understood as a fait accompli in this life, as a comparison with I Cor 1,18 and II Cor 2,15 will show. Salvation always is 'salvation t o w a r d, i n t o (eis) the Kingdom of God.' 2)

Our study shows that in the New Testament 'salvation' is a term which signifies the work of the grace of God in Jesus Christ for men, including the whole range of meanings which become distinct in such expressions as 'justification', 'redemption', 'reconciliation', 'sanctification'

1) II Cor 6,2

2) II Tim 4,18

and 'sharing the glory of God'.

In Rom 8, salvation even takes on cosmic dimensions. "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God," i.e. our "adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." For this means that "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For in this hope we were saved." (vs. 19-24)

The theological use of the words 'to save' and 'salvation', then, is oriented toward the coming of the Kingdom of God and views the Christian's life previous to the parousia of Jesus as a 'being saved', a life on the way toward salvation, which is still to 'enter' salvation and to become, in itself, a 'saved' life; a life which has 'found' salvation in Jesus Christ. The life of the Christian is 'saved', therefore, not because it has salvation in itself or has been transformed to the extent that no further salvation is needed, 1) but because of the indwelling presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit. Our life is a saved life because he is our life. 2) The life of the Christian is saved to the extent to which he can say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me," 3) and to that extent only. That means that salvation is not

1) This transformation is to come at the coming of Christ; see I Cor 15,51

2) Col 3,4

3) Gal 2,20

a work of God finished at the time and on the spot where it was begun. "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." 1) It is a process which, on this side of the parousia, is identical with sanctification and, beyond the parousia, is synonymous with glorification. This is the picture which Paul in Rom 5,1-5 has painted with a few deft strokes of his masterful brush. How decisively central Jesus is to this process, he has summarized in I Cor 1,30 (where the order of the sequence in the light of what has been said above need no longer astonish us): "He (God) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." 2)

Our definition of salvation would, therefore, be as follows:

Salvation is the whole of the work of God's grace for man and in man, reconciling, redeeming, justifying, sanctifying and glorifying him in Jesus Christ, - in Christ ever linked to the Kingdom of God, in which it will find its completion.

1) Rom 13,11

2) As in Rom 8, Paul uses 'redemption' as a synonym of 'salvation'. Cf. Eph. 4,30.

The Church.

An attempt to define the Church can only be an attempt at the Church's self-understanding. It can only be made from within the Church, for

this Church, this fellowship of believers, will be misunderstood at the most essential point, if one does not believe himself, believe in the way the Church believes. 1)

This is why the Apostles' Creed includes the Church as an Article of Faith. 'I believe . . . the holy catholic Church.'

It confesses faith in that which is invisible, which is, indeed, the mystery of what is visible. . . . The r e a l Church is by faith perceived in what is visible and so it is a Church invisible behind what is visible. . . . What is decisive in what is unveiled, is veiled. 2)

This is what Paul teaches in I Cor 2 in regard to matters of faith; what is decisive in what is unveiled, is veiled indeed. ". . . what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit." 3)

If the modern non-Christian feels that on this basis it is not possible to define the Church with intellectual honesty, he presupposes that intellectual honesty is equivalent with empirically verifiable logic, and that

1) Hans Küng, THE CHURCH (Hilversum, 1967), p.40 (30)

2) ibid. p.47 (37)

3) vs. 9-10

empirically verifiable logic is his key for the understanding of the things of God. On the contrary! His key is faith, as is ours. In fact, it would be far from intellectually honest if in the definition of the Church that which can only be believed were left out. For human thought is only honest to the extent to which it is loyal to its basic premises. In its desire to explain itself to the World, the Church has sinned perhaps more against this Article of Faith than against any other.

Therefore, we expect to come to a definition of the Church within the context of the Church's life and the Christian faith. Within this context we shall look upward, inward and outward to find w h a t is the Church, in order to answer finally to the question: w h o is the Church?

We look upward and find the Church in its relation to God. Thus, the Church is the family of God's children, a company of redeemed sinners sanctified by Christ in the Holy Spirit. Because he is their Saviour and divine Brother, all and each one are equally loved by and precious to their heavenly Father. 1) This is the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God, the harmony of man's vertical and horizontal relationships for which he was created. This harmony was disrupted by the Fall and man's sinfulness has ever since prevented him from re-establishing it. In Christ it was

1) I John 3,1; Rom 8,14-17

restored. In him, there is no distinction between the Church's members. Before God they stand together in the same dignity: the Church is one. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ." 1) It is inconceivable that in the Church God's children should discriminate against each other on whatever grounds, or that some would lord it over others. If there is order, if there is rule, if there is a hierarchy, it is always one of service. "You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ." 2)

The harmony between the vertical and horizontal relationships of God's children is proportionate to the measure to which the Holy Spirit is in control of both. In so far as that control is lacking, that which is inconceivable in the Church, does in fact occur. The Church does sin.

We look inward and find the structure and unfolding of the life of the Church. Within it there is a widely varied conglomerate of people, who have one thing in common: they worship God in and through Jesus Christ. Wherever and in

1) Gal 3,28

2) Mt 23,8-10 cf. Mk 10,42-45

whatever way they order their communal life, the purpose of the structural order under which they live is to create and preserve their inner freedom before God and man. "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." 1) The forms in which their communal life unfolds are always directed toward the creation of a fellowship of sacrificial love and loyal devotion for each other, in which personal dignity and freedom of decision are safeguarded. "Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." 2) "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all." 3)

Basically, therefore, the character of the communal life of the Church is that of freedom-in-order and love-without-compulsion. In its variegated pattern the Christian finds his place and function. The brokenhearted find comforters. The ignorant are taught. There are helpers for the needy and companions for the lonely. Some search for those that went astray. Others rise up in defense of the Gospel. The Christian's place in the Church is never fixed hard and fast. He may share in one or several functions within the Body of Christ. In teaching,

1) Gal 5,1

2) John 15,13

3) Rom 12,18

he is still a learner himself. Comforting others, he finds hope for himself. It would be a fallacy to contend that the Christian's function in the Church is always one of giving, teaching, serving or helping. It is a true function within the Church for the Christian to be a learner, a listener, a sufferer, a receiver, even a stray sheep. So it is possible to speak of the Church as the Teaching Church and the Learning Church; the Suffering Church and the Serving Church; the Church Besieged and the Church Militant. Some members live on the periphery of the Church, in constant danger of drifting away from her. Others function as the outstretched hands of the Church that will not let them go.

At this point we speak of the Church as 'she'. For the enduring love, tenderness and compassion which have marked her from the day her Lord took possession of her in the Holy Spirit, are still there. They distinguish her from the harsh and merciless religious community where she was born, the Jerusalem of which Paul wrote, "she is in slavery with her children." But the new covenant-community, the Church, has been lifted from that slavery: "the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother." 1)

We look outward and find the Church in combat with the World, not on the terms of the World but on her own terms. 2)

1) Gal 4,25-26

2) II Cor 10,3-4

Neither is this combat a battling of people. 1) It is rather a struggle to effect a breakthrough of the Gospel to all men, combat not against men but in behalf of men, to open up the way of salvation for them. For just as that which is invisible is the mystery and essence of the Church, so also the mystery and essence of the World is invisible. Yet, in this world, the mystery of the Church and the mystery of the World do meet as man meets man. For man is dominated one way or the other. Man was created in obedience to God. He is a being that obeys. He cannot n o t obey. To withdraw his obedience from God can only mean its replacement by another obedience. We are either under the power of sin or under the power of righteousness. 2) In the encounter of Christian and non-Christian, therefore, the first thing that becomes evident is that the cross of Christ has become a demarcation-line running through mankind. The corollary of the gospel that God in his grace sent "the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him," 3) is the distinction between man and man. "He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of

1) Eph 6,12

2) see Rom 6,15-23

3) John 3,17

the only Son of God." 1) This attaches an aspect of judgment to the very existence of the Church, creating hostility, not on the part of the Church, but on the part of the World. Jesus was well aware of this and taught his disciples so, reassuring them however, "I have overcome the world." 2) The Church cannot hope to become inoffensive to the World. No measure of identification with its plight, no degree of secularization in order to deal with the ills of society can forestall that hostility. Basically and ultimately the Church cannot evade addressing itself to men as sinners in need of salvation. The World will always sense that this is the essence of everything the Church does. As Prof. Kraemer put it, "Communication of the message is the crowning category of which all activities of the Church in evangelizing, preaching, teaching, and witnessing to all fields of life are part." 3) Particularly in the modern pluralistic society nothing could be more offensive than an offer of salvation which is at the same time a claim for the supremacy of Jesus Christ, expressed in the words of Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit": "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be

1) John 3,18

2) John 16,33; see also John 15,18-25

3) Hendrik Kraemer, THE COMMUNICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH (Philadelphia, 1956), p.23

saved." 1)

At the same time, the very fact that the offer of salvation is the crowning category of all activities of the Church in the world demonstrates that the Church does not have a monopoly of God's grace. For Jesus Christ is "the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 2) That the Church is in the world at all means that the offer of God's grace to all men still stands and that the Saviour is still at work "to seek and to save the lost." 3)

Therefore, the Church does not pit herself against the hostility of the world. She is to "overcome evil with good." 4) Although she cannot dissociate herself from the judgmental aspect of her very existence, she must proclaim God's forgiveness and mercy in deeds and words. This is her battle. When in Amsterdam in 1948 during the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches Bishop Stephen Neill rose to address the august gathering, he caused a great hush by the question, "When did you last lead someone to Christ?" Thus he put before them the raison d'être of the Church. The Church lives where people come to Christ.

If then the Church lives where people come to Christ,

1) Acts 4, 8 and 12

2) I John 2,2

3) Lk 19,10

4) Rom 12,21

w h o is the Church? Who but the Christ to whom the people come together with the people that have come to him?

Many theologians have failed to push through to this point. Sensing the mystery of the invisible in what is visible, they sought that mystery in some quality of the Christian, some otherworldly factor, some aspect of spirituality in the life of the people of God. Nearly always we find that the definition of the Church in the final analysis amounts to: p e o p l e .

But the Church is first and always Jesus Christ.

Only after that, only with him, in complete dependence on the fact that he is first and always the Church, are the people also the Church.

A host of New Testament statements receive a fuller meaning both for the individual Christian and for the Christian community from this insight: II Cor 5,17; Gal 2,20; John 15,5; Mt 10,40; Eph 2,19-21; I Cor 3,16; Rom 12,5; I Cor 12,12; Col 1,18; Eph 5,31-32; Gal 4,19; etc. A vital analogy between the life of the individual Christian and that of the Church then stands out, viz. that there is essentially one, and o n l y one, mystery in both. It is the presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit; the increasing manifestation of his regal reign in ever new areas of life; the sanctification of the Christian and of the Church. It is the fact that the people of God travel in the company of the King who promised, "Lo, I am with you

always, to the close of the age," 1) not in fear of 'the end' but in the assurance, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." 2)

Of all possible definitions of the Church, therefore, the one that suggests itself as most decisive, most dynamic, most vital and lasting, is the one that is essentially eschatological:

The Church is Jesus Christ the King and his subjects.

1) Mt 28,20

2) Lk 12,32

B. THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

It has become clear that the Church is not identical with the Kingdom of God. She is too troubled, too sinful, too far from being under a reign of God that is uncontested, universal and eternal. Too often she has taken to her heart those who are not her children. She has too often rejected those who were her own. She is too involved with the World to make it plain how much God loves the world.

She is not the Kingdom of God. But she is all we have of the Kingdom of God, nevertheless. For she is the Bride of the King, the "Jerusalem above". 1) She is known to faith not by her agonizing pilgrimage through this world, not even by her clinging to the cross of Christ. She is known to faith in the light of the coming of her King in glory.

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes . . . " 2)

The coming of the Kingdom is not the end of the Church. It is the glory of the Church. It is the point at

1) Gal 4,26

2) Rev 21,2-4

which her King will "present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." 1)

The relation of the Church and the Kingdom of God is given in the presence of him who is first and always and before any man himself the Church, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

That to the King the Kingdom means his people and to the people the Kingdom means their King; that the Church has found in him the King and he has found in the Church the people of the Kingdom of God, t h a t is the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God.

1) Eph 5,27

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